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THE ORGANIZED SUNDAY SCHOOL

AXTELL

A
WORKING
MANUAL
FOR
OFFICERS

S. Sch.

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THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The Organized Sunday School

A Working Manual for Officers

By
J. W. AXTELL

Author of

"The Teaching Problem," "Grading the Sunday School," "The Teacher's Handbook," "The Superintendent's Handbook"

Seventh Edition—Revised

**Philadelphia
The Westminster Press
1908**

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INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION

This little book is meant to be intensely practical and wholly practicable. It is right out of the Sunday school work-shop, and may be regarded as the transcript of an active and varied Sunday school experience. It is written upon request, and with the hope that it may be widely usable and profitably used. There is not in it all an atom of untested theory.

The Sunday school now has a rich and comprehensive literature distinctly its own, and the apology for this addition to it is that the busy Sunday school officer, whose reading must be condensed into scattered minutes, is often somewhat at a loss, amid the countless rich suggestions presented, to place his hand quickly upon something clearly and immediately available.

But little will be said in these pages about what the Sunday school officer should be. This ground has been fully covered by scores of pens. There is no need at this day to say of him, let his relation to the Sunday school be what it may, that he should be consecrated, as well informed as may be, and wholly devoted to his work. These are undebatable propositions. What he should *do*, and *how he should do it*, will be the burden of this message; and if in some measure the needs of a fellow worker here and there should thus be met, it will be a richly requited labor of love.

THE AUTHOR.

Nashville, Tenn.

PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION

When "The Organized Sunday School" appeared, several years ago, it was at once given a place among front-line Sunday school textbooks. It has grown in favor, too, as it has grown older. However, the Sunday school world has been moving in these passing years, and it has occurred to the author that his own experiences in that time may justify the furnishing of additional practical deductions and suggestions.

This is in all essential particulars the book with which the Sunday school public is already familiar—only brought up to the measure of still broader opportunity. It will be found, even more than before, the product of the Sunday school work-shop, and has been revised in the hope of helping still more substantially such of those workers in the nursery of the church as may become its readers.

THE ORGANIZED SUNDAY SCHOOL

CHAPTER I

ORGANIZATION

The usefulness and efficiency of any institution is positive or relative according as the institution itself is or is not thoroughly organized and systematically conducted. Success in attaining the objects for which it is created is necessarily measured by the limit of its organic completeness.

To speak of anything as an organization is to try to express that thing concretely—i. e., in terms of its capacity for work and possibilities of accomplishment. It is to take its measure for usefulness. It is the institution with its coat off, its sleeves rolled up, and its muscles tense for action. This is what we mean when we speak of the Sunday school as an organization.

**In Its Concrete
Form.**

The renewed growth and increased efficiency of the Sunday school of our time are largely due to improved organization. Through organization it is becoming more and more a force

for education, evangelization and training in and for church work. Whatever it may have been in other days, the Sunday school is now more than a spiritual possibility—more than a spiritual influence—more than a spiritual auxiliary—more than a spiritual force—it is a spiritual power.

That the Sunday school is not everywhere more of an educator, not more of an evangelistic agency, not more of a training school for church work, not in an infinitely larger measure a spiritual power—is simply because it is not everywhere more complete and thorough as an organization. It is best in all of these phases directly *as an organization*. It is unrecognizable in more or less of them in many places because in those places it is really not organized.

In all too many places the Sunday school can hardly claim positive character, because it has none. It is hardly an educator, because it does not educate. It is hardly an evangelistic agency, because it has little to do with saving souls. It hardly trains for church work, for it does little work. It sometimes is nothing, accomplishes nothing, and almost stands for nothing. It too often is but the feeble embodiment of an attempt to do something at which its sponsors are hardly conscious of aiming, with an agency which is altogether shapeless, meaningless, headless and inefficient. These are plain words; but

**Waxing in
Strength.**

**Why it is not
Greater.**

**Unpalatable
Truth.**

they are born of an optimism which believes that the first and most important step in the correction of a weakness or an evil is a frank and full recognition of its existence and character.

Without discussing the many factors which contribute to a greater or less extent to the situation described, it must be charged primarily to what in many cases is imperfection in organization, and in many others is utter lack of

**A Fundamental
Trouble.**

organization. Such matters as imperfections in our lesson system, inadequate methods of instruction, low pedagogical standards, undue magnifying of the less important things and minimizing of the essentials—all of these are live issues in connection with the inefficiency of the Sunday school; but they cannot even be fully enumerated here.

It is patent that many Christian people have altogether erroneous ideas about organization. The simplicity of the principle involved is often not understood. There is a misty idea that organization is a combination of scheming, and ring methods, and complicated processes; and at the mere mention of it an impalpable spectre rises to chill and alarm.

**A Mistaken Con-
ception.**

There are those who believe that organization is altogether inimical to the spiritual. They look upon it as essentially cold-blooded and mercenary. It is set down as machinery, and nothing else. Organization may of course be perverted into hostility to the spiritual;—not so

readily, though, as the lack of organization may be, in effect. It may be icy and selfish;—but in these manifestations it can never measure up with that condition in which the individual is found who refuses to work except alone and in his own way. A machine may sometimes be nothing but a machine, after all;—but lack of organization makes of the possible efficient machine nothing but a pile of scrap iron—than which few things are more utterly worthless.

Imaginary Objections.

Without discussing whimsical objections to thoroughly organized work, or misconceptions as to its purpose and effect, let it suffice to point to the evident forethought and plan that were manifested all along through the work of our Savior; how he trained, and explained, and inspired; how he sent out the seventy by twos, to do specific things; and how the early church set apart men for special service, under thorough system.

As it was in the Beginning.

Bare mention only need be made of the achievements of modern evangelism. The ways of working of Moody in his day, and of his successors in ours, illustrate an appreciation of complete organization rarely surpassed in secular affairs. The Student Volunteer Movement, the spiritual wonder of our time, is perhaps the most thoroughly organized evangelical power which the church as a whole has at its

Spiritual Organizations.

command to-day. Nothing like it has ever been known. It is equally true that it is *a perfect machine*—a machine which blesses beyond conception everything in any way brought within the scope of its influence. Wherein, beyond the special blessing of God himself, lies the power and efficiency of modern missions? From limit to limit, and from first to last, organization is the keynote of achievement in missions. Looking over all these fields, and kindred fields, and noting the succession of effort and accomplishment, it is not too much to say that spirituality is the highest form of organized religious life.

Organization as applied to things religious, as to all other things, is almost the life principle itself. In the religious field it is often, beyond question, the creation of visible life. In other instances it is certainly the evolution of life.

**Organization
and Life.**

Under all conditions it is the resultant manifestation of life. And everywhere, in the broadest possible sense, it is the stimulation of life.

Given the recognizable beginning of religious possibilities in the community, what may organization be expected to accomplish, if permitted to do its natural work?

It creates power. It gathers unused bits of talent here and there; discovers and combines unsuspected elements of strength; develops latent resources; eliminates or fortifies palpable weakness; finds a place for and utilizes every available sympathetic influence;—and all

**The Creation of
Power.**

in good time a cumulative creation arises which must be reckoned with in estimating the active forces of the community.

It utilizes individuality. The finest work ever done for the Master is undoubtedly hand-to-hand, heart-to-heart, individual work. There is

Using the Individual.

nothing like it; nothing can take its place. And yet the individual worker is increased

many-fold as a valuable religious asset in the community when he becomes a positive integral in an active organization. It is then that he is measured and given the responsibility for which he is best adapted, and it is there that his single weak arm becomes a part of an arm of unmeasured strength.

It corrects aimlessness. The name of those good people is legion who, willing enough to do something if intelligently directed, fritter

Helping the Aimless.

away their energies in beating the air. It is the case of the young lady whom a wag

called a gospel piano player, because her right hand never knew what her left hand was doing. The church power that is wasted because either misdirected, or not directed at all, cannot be measured.

It conserves vitality. The "poor dying rate" of which Isaac Watts sings pictures the spiritual life of representative communities everywhere. Religious vitality, however, is the merest spark in countless places where, under the conserving care of organization, it may become an inspiring flame.

It eliminates vacillation. Half the nominally Christian people stand for nothing religiously in the community when standing alone. In fact any kind of crucial issue is as apt to find them on the wrong side as elsewhere. Organization, with its sympathies, its activities, and its general stimulus to better things, is a powerful factor in developing strength from this weakness.

**It Strengthens
the Weak.**

Better than all, perhaps, organization prevents the dissipation of energies. Twenty different people attempting to do twenty different things (half of them not worth the doing) in twenty different ways! This is an all too common picture of religious effort. While all too little is done, if all that is done were done through concerted action, for a common purpose, and to a well-defined end, the position of the church in the world would be vastly improved.

**It Conserves En-
ergies.**

The church is full of sealed lips which need to be speaking burning words for the Master; of tied hands which if loosed would be available to work for Him; of clogged feet which are ready to run for Him; of unexpanded lungs which may shout for Him; of stagnated circulation which waits to throb through the veins in His service;—all because organization has not liberated, energized and directed them.

Some Latent Possibilities.

My next door neighbor is building a house.

Some weeks ago I noticed a gradual accumulation of brick, and stone, and lumber, and sand on the premises. This gathered material was, for the time, nothing but litter. It furnished

**An Organizer's
Work.**

nothing for the neighborhood except dust to filter into the windows. It was altogether an unsightly nuisance as it lay. But an organizer came along—and the litter is blossoming into a home, the shell into which is to be introduced the sweet kernel of family life.

I stood not long ago by a smiling child cut in the purest white marble by a sculptor who had brought out of the block almost everything

**In Marble and
in Flesh.**

but the music of a ringing laugh. The image was charming. People passing looked at it, and came back to look and enjoy again. But the child which comes to your knee in gleeful mirth accomplishes on the instant a presentation which the art of ten thousand years can never approach. The church is too often the beautiful but soulless image—too rarely the perfect living organism.

Organization means *leadership*. A wild mob is destroying life and property, and endangering the existence of a city. An intrepid organizer

**Every-day Illus-
trations.**

with a few score of disciplined men scatters it to the winds and restores confidence and order. A great business is splendidly equipped and manned, but is paralyzed because it has no head. A real leader appears, and hitherto

aimless energies are harnessed to the work of grinding out profits and creating credit. Egypt, reeking equally with fertility and with political and moral filth, was the scorn of the nations. In a quarter of a century Sir Evelyn Baring makes it a magnificent power, crowding for a place among the great civilized peoples.

Not only is leadership the nucleus of organization, but organization is the discoverer and creator of leadership. The one begets and inspires the other. Wherever circumstances and conditions point to the need of organization, something is to be found out of which the component parts of such organization may be made. The material may be crude and unfinished—even unpromising—but it is there, awaiting the touch of opportunity to develop.

**Evolution of
Leadership.**

Leadership presupposes a following. Organization means the development of leadership through the stimulus of absolute following. It means plan and system, working through a recognized and established head. It means at the same time unhesitating loyalty to such head, and unquestioning following of its lead.

**Leadership's
Complement.**

Our personal belongings, our associations, the institutions with which we are connected, are usually intrinsically or relatively valuable to us according as we put something of value, in property, service, or otherwise into them. We can only make these things valuable to others

**How Values Are
Made.**

and the community by the same processes by which we make them of value to ourselves.

What are we as a rule giving to the Sunday school? Is it not true that, to a great extent, we are trying to gather where we have not strewn? We have perhaps hoped for results from efforts which we have not made—except in our own minds—or which, if made, have been spasmodic, aimless, incoherent—impossible of result.

**Is This Way
Our Way?**

A book recently issued is dedicated to one “who sometimes leads the simple life, who often leads the strenuous life, but who always leads the efficient life.” The Sunday school is calling loudly to-day for the efficient life.

**Wanted—The
Efficient Life.**

Its needs are many, but this one is so thoroughly fundamental that it overshadows all others. This one supplied, all that is desirable beside is feasible. This one missing, it is almost as if all were missing. The efficient life! Is any organized work worth attempting without the efficient life unit?

These words concerning the attitude of the individual toward the Sunday school are spoken because the organic life of the Sunday school is only the aggregate of individual lives, symmetrically assembled and comprehensively guided. The school can rise no higher in the quality of its available working force than the personnel of the aggregation will justify. That

**The One in the
Many**

personnel, however, as far as we are individually concerned, will be just what we make it, and no more.

The best type of organization is the most effective assembling of efficient units and the massing of them in a comprehensive whole. Students of efficiency will recognize that twenty people may be so organized as to be doubly ef-

**And the Many
in One.**

ficient as compared with the same twenty people organized in some other way. So it transpires that a carefully considered arrangement of available forces is not always so effective as it might be made with slight changes. Almost any systematic marshalling of forces, however, be the marshalling ever so faulty, and the units ever so weak, is better than go-as-you-please processes and the consequent hit-or-miss results; for go-as-you-please usually means that one does not go at all, and hit-or-miss is almost invariably miss.

Method and organization are entirely different things, yet there is some confusion of ideas concerning them; for in a sense organization covers method in its more general application. Method is largely an individual affair. One's

**Method and Or-
ganization.**

specific way of doing specific things is his method, just as his gait in walking is his own; and in this individuality and large measure of originality lies the special effectiveness of personal work. Organization is the co-ordination of individual elements, with their gifts, peculiarities and training, in an effective whole—the combination of

steam-chest, piston, governor, fly-wheel, etc., in the complete engine.

In this book it is desired to especially stress that phase of the principle of organization which so affects the school that because of it the school

lives, rather than exists; the
Genuine Organic Life. *fact of organism which distin-*

guishes the tree from the
 rock at its foot; the *quality* of organic life which distinguishes the hardy seed from which the forest springs from the lichen which lives and dies in only holding its place.

The Sunday school needs common sense. It needs this in its inception, at every step in its development, as a constant guide and balance for

its altruism, as an arbiter in
The Only Safe Guide. *the settlement of its ever-rising delicate questions, in the*

disposal of its forces, in the adjustment of its activities, in the distribution of its benefits, in the recognition of its special workers, in the stimulation of its sluggards, in the utilization of its successes, in the maintenance of symmetry in its expansion, in its every phase, feature and possibility. Common sense must guide in every successful religious movement. It necessarily leads, analyzes, exploits, corrects, stimulates, utilizes, achieves. Organization is its concrete expression, its visible manifestation, its practical application. Through organization it is harnessed to Sunday school activity, just as it is similarly connected with every religious movement engaged in taking the world for Christ.

As applied to the Sunday school the first work of organization is the wise distribution of official responsibility—a most important function. No less important is thorough classification. A crucial re-
Organization Applied.
sponsibility is the selection of teachers. Equally difficult is the grading, training and unifying of the teaching force. Then the teaching itself comes in for a full measure of attention. The activities of the school, its benevolences, its extension, its collateral work, and the elimination of the haphazard from all of its functions, has each its turn at the hands of organization. The discussion of this application will be found in the succeeding chapters.

CHAPTER II

ORGANIZATION APPLIED

People are accustomed to speak of successful Sunday school management as though it were a great mystery—an occult science. It is ap-

**Not an Occult
Science.**

parently regarded as something requiring unusual conditions and exceptional official personnel. This is misapprehension pure and simple. Sunday school management is none of these things. The misapprehension grows out of an overestimate of what really constitutes success, an underestimate of the ability of available people to achieve it, and a misconception of the kind of work of which it is born. Success is necessarily relative; but a measure of it which will justify well-considered, persistent, prayerful effort is as sure as He for whom we work is sure. Besides, success may be real without being apparent.

Men are undertaking ten thousand different kinds of work every day, and in each kind of work certain principles are regarded as applicable and necessary. Success is recognized as altogether improbable, if not impossible, where these principles are ignored or only indifferently ap-

plied. The world has given a most happy name to the science of doing all things well, and that science, as stated in the preceding chapter, is common sense. The trouble with much of our Sunday school management is that

**Only Common
Sense.**

there is too little of common sense in it. We are apt to forget about practical things and practical standards when we assume its responsibilities. We try to achieve results without establishing the conditions which would naturally lead to results—and the outcome is unsatisfactory. In the nature of the case the outcome cannot be otherwise than unsatisfactory; and in no other work similarly directed and prosecuted would we be so presumptuous as to expect to get even within the shadow of a special success.

"But," says some one, "the Sunday school is the Lord's work, and he will take care of it." Certainly, he will take just as good care of it as we will make it possible for him to take; but he will *not* reward conspicuous inefficiency

**Some Basal Con-
ditions.**

on the part of leaders, any more than he will reward manifest and persistent indifference on the part of the church membership. He will *not* make good the shortcomings of official listlessness. He will *not* make our lack of faithfulness to duty accomplish what faithfulness alone, even with his blessing, can be made to accomplish. His blessing awaits the manifestation of diligence in business—*his* business—the King's business. We are especially blessed in what we

are and in what we do when we establish the conditions which make such blessing possible.

The foundation of good Sunday school management lies in thorough organization, and this in turn begins with the office-creating power.

**Favoritism and
Sentiment.**

The school must be officered with the very best material at hand, just as it must be equipped with teachers on the same principle. The Sunday school is no place for the exercise of favoritism, or, equally bad, a yielding to sentiment. It is a place for the highest discriminating courage. It is frequently a seemingly delicate matter to set aside one individual and select another for a responsible office, but *it must be done* if the work is not to suffer. It is a mistake to allow any consideration except the good of the school to rule in the premises; yes, it is more than a mistake—it is a crime against the school. Sunday school failure is perhaps due as largely to an undue yielding to sentiment as to any other cause.

**A Division of
Labor.**

The officers having been chosen, the same principle holds good in their sub-appointments and in the division of the work of the school in their hands. This point will be more fully brought out in the discussion of the personal and official work of the officers. Suffice it to say that a principle highly promotive of effective organization is the widest distribution of minor responsibilities compatible with efficient service; being careful, however, to avoid such elaboration

as will create confusion of duties, or establish responsibilities which are purely imaginary. Responsibilities must be real.

The plans in organization should consist largely in getting people into responsible relation to the school, rather than in manifestly "running" the institution with the people as spectators. Popular co-operation is indispensable—it

Popular Co-operation.

simply *must* be secured. If one plan for securing it fails, another must be tried—and another—and another—until the problem is solved, as it may be in a great majority of cases. A Sunday school is often started as a one-man affair, a kind of start which is likely to leave it little more than a one-man affair throughout its history. The two or three individuals who so often arrogate to themselves the right to direct and shape the policy and work of the Sunday school in the community are apt, by their assumption of that prerogative, to alienate many good people who would otherwise fall in line for the best of work.

It should ever be kept in mind that special Sunday school success is only possible when the greatest number of individuals naturally tributary to the school feel that they are in some degree standing sponsors for it. There are

Lining up the Sponsors.

a great many good people who, although they may have nothing of themselves to suggest, will resent all efforts to interest them in something about which they have in no way been consulted;

while they will heartily support that which they have been asked to assist in organizing. Sunday school organizers blunder when they forget or ignore those from whom substantial aid may thus be secured.

There is just one way of organizing a permanently influential and widely useful Sunday school. A temporary or limited success may

Two Identical
Rolls. be achieved by other means—
a success contingent upon an

individual or two, each of whom is a bundle of energy and consecration. A mere shifting aggregation, though, depending upon the enterprise or faithfulness of a single worker, or a few workers, is *not* a good Sunday school. A school so organized is likely to be a power to-day, and to be forgotten to-morrow. That school only is well and properly organized which has, not only upon its rolls but within its classes, the rank and file of the church with which it is connected. It is not enough that a dozen church members out of a total of fifty are at work in the school, or a total of fifty out of two hundred—though these are not unusual averages in Sunday schools as we find them. The making of the church roll and the Sunday school roll so nearly identical that the latter shall practically embrace the former is the first condition of the very best type of school. The writer has seen this result achieved under most adverse conditions, and believes it possible in a majority of instances as a consequence of persistent and untiring effort. Such an end is cer-

tainly worth almost any personal or congregational labor and sacrifice necessary for its achievement.

A crying need of all our Sunday schools is better organization. The loosely formed, unassimilated collections of good people found in so many Sunday schools need to be made over into well organized bodies. The very

**Order out of
Confusion.**

men who conduct great business enterprises admirably often manage Sunday schools miserably—because the one kind of institution is organized for positive results, while the other is usually thrown together for whatever *may* result. A school of fifty members in one neighborhood, working together on well-considered plans, will accomplish several times as much as another school of twice the size, similarly located, but lacking organization and singleness of purpose. How the Sunday school suffers by comparison with the secular schools in these particulars! Granting that the latter type of school is in most places an unrealizable ideal for the Sunday school, a much closer approximation to it is nevertheless everywhere practicable.

Organization establishes and locates responsibility, and lack of responsibility is the prevalent characteristic weakness of our Sunday school system. Organization works by and to positive standards. How badly the Sunday school needs to have its aims focused and its standards held inviolable! Organization secures thorough-

**A Contrasting of
Conditions.**

ness, discipline, promptness. To what an extent are these essentials to good work ignored in the representative Sunday school!

But we must not mistake the meaning of organization. It is not merely the naming of certain individuals for certain responsibilities, to be discharged in a perfunctory manner, let that manner be ever so formally perfect. In

**Organization
Summed up.**

the Sunday school it is much more than the adoption of working rules, with an expressed or implied declaration of purposes, and the election of officers to be guided by the one in working out the other. These are simply rudimentary—only the husks in which a ripe kernel should be found. Organization is life and activity. It is union. It is strength. It is soul and sense. It is the touching of elbows and the joining of hands in forward movement. It is the heart-throb which moves the multitude as one individual. It is the vital chord which unites in an indescribable sympathy the superintendent at his desk, the restless boy on the distant chair, and the teacher bending her head into the circle of little heads gathered around her—making a symmetrical power of the whole.

CHAPTER III

THE SUPERINTENDENT—HIS PREROGATIVES

While he is the chief officer in the Sunday school, the superintendent is naturally amenable to the power which placed him in office, whether it be the assembled members of the church to which the school belongs, or an official

A Quasi Subordinate.

board of the church. He is also in a sense second in command in the Sunday school, the pastor being the chief officer of the church in all its departments of work. He is a subordinate more in name, though, than in fact, as his work is of a character which necessarily renders his plans operative and his decision final in nearly everything connected with the management of the school.

The superintendent's position is one whose responsibilities are divisible to only a limited extent. After he has placed upon the shoulders of his associate officers every burden which can with propriety be transferred from his own, there remains, essentially and unavoidably, a responsibility which attaches to no other lay officer in the church. This being true, his

A Fixed Official Burden.

prerogatives should be commensurate with the burden which he must carry. That is to say, having been chosen to direct the school, he should be allowed (except under conditions rarely known) without official interference to direct it. In the nature of the case he *must*

Necessary Pre-rogatives. give much more study to Sunday school needs than can be

given by anybody else in the church, and possibly as much as is given by all others in the church put together. It follows that he has a more comprehensive view of these needs than anybody else *can* have. Besides, he is called up to the bar of the church annually to give an account of his stewardship—not leaving his mistakes, like those of other church officers in many instances, to be rectified at long intervals or at death, if rectified at all.

Under these circumstances the earnest, self-respecting man must be given practically full charge of that for which as an individual he is held responsible. It should be

To be Given Full Charge. for him to lead and direct, and to decide in all matters

not involving radical changes of policy. The thoughtful pastor is always glad to leave a worthy man thus untrammelled. If a superintendent is to do his best he must be given an opportunity to do his best. Give the right kind of a man this kind of control of a school, and both he and his charge will grow and develop more satisfactorily than under any other conditions. Tie his hands, and surround him with

petty limitations, which altogether restrict his freedom of action, and the growth is unlikely to put a strain upon these limits. The fact of his election to the office is an expression of confidence, and no one in any sense worthy of this confidence will or can in a single year seriously damage the institution placed in his hands.

In several denominational organizations it is designed, and sometimes it is stipulated, that the appointment of Sunday school teachers shall be a prerogative of the church session. In theory this is correct, and with sessions as they

**Appointment of
Teachers.**

should be the responsibility could not with propriety be placed otherwise. However, taking the average session as we find it, this policy is impracticable. Under prevalent conditions the selection of teachers and their adjustment to the classes cannot be cared for in any other way so well as to be left in the hands of the superintendent. This work is almost sure to be badly mixed if entrusted to a church session or to a board of Sunday school officers. Teachers whose availability is under discussion are very often members of the families of the officers composing these boards, or may be members of the boards themselves, thus complicating the situation, and rendering it almost impossible to avoid favoritism or the fatal policy of sacrificing sense to sentiment.

The superintendent, as ordinarily situated, may with propriety insist upon the exercise of the prerogative of appointing teachers, and in doing

so should hold firmly to the idea that the term of the teacher, like his own term, *is only for one year*; that the expiration of the year, which

All Terms for One Year. brings his own re-election, or his relief from duty, brings to the teacher the necessity of

also submitting to the appointing power the matter of re-appointment or retirement. There is a kind of unwritten law in many schools that the term of the teacher, like Tennyson's brook, may run on forever, in contradistinction to the treatment accorded to every other individual officially connected with the Sunday school. The discrimination practiced by Sunday schools in this particular is wholly indefensible, and as a consequence there is almost invariably a much greater need for changes in teachers than in anything else, or in all things else combined, which affect the work of the school.

Teachers are sometimes almost and occasionally are altogether insubordinate in the matter of yielding control of classes to which they have

Possible Insubordination. become attached. The position assumed by a stubborn teacher in a case where an

honest superintendent thinks a change should be made is never tenable. The teacher who arrogates to himself the decision as to whether he be given charge of a certain class, or whether he should at any given time teach in the school at all, occupies an unreasonable position. The superintendent in nearly every case knows more about the matter in hand than the teacher *can*

know. The one is on all sides of the problem; the other views it from a single and sometimes a selfish standpoint. If the superintendent should be wrong, the mistake can be rectified at the end of the year. The teacher's error, if yielded to, only becomes the more harmful to the school as the years go by.

It is sometimes very difficult to withstand the pressure to continue inefficient teachers in service. This very difficulty, though, may safely be taken as evidence of the need of change. The teacher who is unwilling to retire is usually

A Most Unwelcome Duty.

the one whose retirement is imperative. While it may now and then be necessary to temporarily waive the point at issue, opportunities for elimination and substitution in such cases frequently come unexpectedly, and should never be allowed to pass unimproved. The superintendent will find this the most trying and thankless part of his work, and will always incur more or less risk of being misunderstood in connection with it. His duty is clear, nevertheless.

In the exercise of his prerogatives the superintendent must be careful to assert himself only so far as the efficient discharge of his duties may require. He should not be an autocrat. His Sunday school constituents are frequently

An Understanding Needed.

only too willing, though, to accord to him more rights than he is disposed to claim, even to the point of allowing him to carry a liberal measure of their responsibilities along with his own. It

is unfortunate that the relations of the Sunday school to the superintendent, and the relations of the superintendent to the Sunday school, are not as a rule properly understood by both. There is a kind of notion prevalent in many churches that when one is chosen to this office it is his business, in conjunction with about enough adults to fill the other offices and furnish a corps of teachers, to *make* the Sunday school—instead of his being chosen to lead the entire

**A Confused
Officer.**

church in making and maintaining the Sunday school. The superintendent himself, raised in an atmosphere of mistaken notions about all of these things, is apt to take it for granted that he is to be just what this narrow view of things will make him, unsupported and unaided by many of those who joined in pressing his work upon him.

Brother, let me urge you to assert and maintain as your highest prerogative the right to call for and expect the fullest and freest coöperation of the entire church community in whatever may be undertaken in the name of the Sunday school.

**His Great Pre-
rogative.**

The call to leadership which carries with it no implied call to the remainder of the church membership to be led has no significance whatever. You are missing the most important part of your commission when you fail to thus use this as a rallying-point in your work.

CHAPTER IV

THE SUPERINTENDENT—HIS FIELD WORK.

The services of Sunday are, of course, the culmination of the week in the labors of the superintendent. These are what the public sees, and by these the superintendent is measured. This finish to the week, however, is the lightest part of his official duties. The thoughtful know that he has spent hours and hours through the week to secure sixty or seventy-five minutes of result on Sunday. The work of one Sunday is barely completed when preparation for the next begins. Indeed, the best type of superintendent finds his weeks overlapping each other in his preparation, and usually plans his work so far ahead that he would sometimes be puzzled to determine just when any given coming event first received a measure of attention. For want of a better name let us call a part of his work outside of the Sunday school room his Field Work—and to a discussion of this the next few pages will be devoted.

**Preparation and
Result.**

The statement can be made without hesitation that a prime necessity to good Sunday school work is a teachers' meeting. So important is

this meeting that even if very irregular and only fairly well conducted it should by all means be sustained. I used to be of a different opinion,

but am now convinced that
The Teachers' Meeting. even a poor teachers' meeting
 is better than none at all.

Without the periodical assembling of teachers and officers for counsel even the best of work is weak and lame. There is no such thing as acting in perfect harmony, coöperating intelligently and effectively, with everybody keeping step to the music of Sunday school progress, if the teachers know each other officially only in the Sunday school hour.

The basal idea of the teachers' meeting is gathering for the study and discussion of the coming lesson. This, though, can hardly be

named the paramount consid-
The Lesson Only a Part. eration. The study of the
 lesson may be attended to at

home; indeed, the best study, and the best remembered results of study, are connected with the home. But the other good things belonging to the teachers' meeting are wholly lost without that meeting. It may be stated as a general principle that people who are engaged in similar work will do that work better and more successfully if they meet from time to time to consult about it and discuss plans for its prosecution. Especially is this true if their work is in connection with a single institution of which they form a part, and in whose central object they are personally and deeply interested. This

is exactly the situation in which teachers in the Sunday school are placed.

The teachers' meeting should include all the teachers in all departments of the school, all substitute teachers, all the officers, the pastor, and all members of the school who will attend. This is naturally the superintendent's class, and he should have it in charge. It is better that he teach the lesson, though this may sometimes be better done by the pastor or some other well qualified individual. It is preferable that there be one teacher, rather than that the lesson leadership change from meeting to meeting. In any case the superintendent should preside.

**The Meeting's
Make-up.**

Those attending this meeting should be enrolled like any other class, and the secretary of the school should keep a class-book, mark attendance, and look up absences, just as in the Sunday school itself. Let every teacher understand that membership in this class is imperative, and that in the reports of the school faithfulness or negligence here will be taken into regular account. In short, hold out the idea that this must be the best class—the model class—of the school. Stick closely to this plan, and results will take care of themselves.

**An Enrolled
Class.**

Teachers should be required to make at least some preparation on the lesson before coming to the meeting, which is no place for the beginning of lesson study. The teaching should

consist of a succinct and clear statement of the points of the lesson, brought out as far as possible by questions. There should be no fine elaboration, and teachers should

Teaching the Teachers.

always be left in the main to their own devices as to the use to be made of the points elicited. Time limits should be placed on every participant. Have the participation as general as possible, and aim at cultivating clearness and brevity. Avoid the introduction of indeterminate questions and rambling discussions as you would a pestilence. Should these in some way creep in cut them off summarily. Better kill such things than kill the meeting—for one of the two must die. This part of the meeting should not ordinarily cover more than twenty or twenty-five minutes.

For the business part of the meeting, which is the more vital part, the superintendent should always have some topic or topics ready for discussion. Here is the place to

And Now for Business.

submit working plans, and these are the people to make them effective. Instead of haranguing the school on Sunday morning concerning some proposed change in the exercises or some new line of work, thoroughly indoctrinate your teachers with it, and have them easily and smoothly swing their classes into line, as they in most instances will succeed in doing. The teachers' meeting is a place where many things may be well done which if first undertaken in the Sunday school hour are done to little purpose.

Here are some topics which may be introduced in the teachers' meeting to advantage: Methods of teaching; methods of recruiting; Sunday school equipment and finances; Sunday school reviews; the spiritual welfare of the pupils; the elevation of the school's standards of work; good points observed in other schools; the weak points of your own school; how to use lesson helps; how to help the poor in your school and in the community; the general interests of the school; assisting denominational enterprises, etc. The field is boundless, and a good topic need never be lacking. No school can keep up such a meeting for a year without feeling a new life-blood throbbing through its veins; nor can the same result be secured in any other way. It would be better if the entire meeting did not occupy more than about forty minutes—although this is a matter of local conditions and preferences.

Some Appropriate Topics.

As a rule the teachers' meeting is most successful when held immediately following the mid-week prayer meeting, and at the church. The pastor is usually glad to shorten the prayer meeting a little, and the habitual attendance of many teachers at prayer meeting helps to solve the problem of getting together a full class of teachers; while, conversely, the teachers' meeting helps the prayer meeting. It is much more difficult to sustain a meeting held on a distinct evening, although this is sometimes done

The Time and Place.

under favorable conditions. The rural Sunday school meets with pronounced difficulties in maintaining a regular teachers' meeting, but the ingenuity of an industrious superintendent can usually in some way solve the problem. The superintendent who would do the best work cannot spare the meeting, even though conditions be persistently adverse.

It is sometimes the case in towns and cities that a number of Sunday schools can combine for that part of the teachers' meeting which is

A Neighborhood Meeting. connected with the teaching of the lesson. The opportunity of joining in such a meeting may,

in a school here and there, show the way to a superintendent who is unable to get his teachers together for lesson instruction. Under these circumstances, though, a separate meeting should be held from time to time for the other purposes already discussed.

When the business side of the teachers' meeting is unsatisfactory the superintendent can institute to advantage a teachers' quarterly council,

The Teachers' Council. to be held between the closing Sunday of one quarter and the opening Sunday of the

next. This council thus held can have before it the completed work of one quarter, which may be intelligently used in planning future work. Even if the teachers' meeting be all that can reasonably be expected of it, this special quarterly gathering will be quite helpful. It furnishes the occasion for a detailed and careful review of

past work, a matter which receives sufficient attention in comparatively few Sunday schools. The quarterly council may be held at the home of the superintendent, or some other member of the circle, and should be a social as well as a business meeting.

Another and a very important part of the superintendent's field work is connected with his social and business life. Opportunities without number of directly or indirectly promoting his Sun-
**Out in the Com-
munity.**

day school work are met with in every-day life by the man who has this work on his heart. This is too apparent to need explanation. Of course the Sunday school can be brought to the front in season and out of season, in conversation and in business intercourse; but there is much less danger that the "out of season" introduction will be overdone than that the "in season" will be overlooked. The superintendent's face should be a familiar one in the homes of his teachers and fellow-officers, on whom he should not hesitate to make personal calls with Sunday school purposes only and obviously in view. Tactful, friendly calls upon private members of the school may also be scheduled among the things clearly belonging to his field work.

From all that has been said it follows that the superintendent should not only be well known in the community, but that his personal acquaintance should be at least co-extensive with the reach of the school. He should know on sight

and promptly recognize every one in any way related to his school, should know the parents, whereabouts and surroundings of every new scholar, and should be able to inject his personality into home circles everywhere in his environment.

**The Stranger
in Office.**

A stranger is sometimes chosen to this office, and a very trying and unsatisfactory official experience is pretty certain to follow. I once undertook the work under these conditions, and am sure that circumstances must be peculiar which will warrant such a choice.

CHAPTER V

THE SUPERINTENDENT—HIS HOME WORK

"His home work!" you say. "What! is there no place this man can enter and leave his Sunday school behind?" No, not until he enters his grave. He'll get his perfect rest after a while, when he rests from everything else; **The Work Can Never Stop.** but until relieved by death, or the end of his term of office, there is no time when he can fold up his Sunday school duties, label them "Left until called for," and lay them aside for an indefinite period. Much less can he do this at home, for here is his work-shop, and here the whole character of his service to the school is determined. The best type of superintendent often does no other part of his work so well as his home work. No superintendent who would be thoroughly efficient can ignore this, even if he be rarely skilled in every other line of Sunday school activity.

It is at this point that the failure of many a promising Sunday school begins. The superintendent recognizes no home duties in connection with his office, and the school loses entirely the good which can come from nothing else

but the proper discharge of these duties. The inefficient incumbent of this office either does not know that the life of his school is created

**A Beginning of
Failure.**

in his home, or knowing does not care. In either case the result is the same. By the way, the word "incumbent" is highly suggestive in this connection. It makes one think of "recumbent," "incumbrance," and words equally depressing. It is suggestive of something to be thrown off and gotten rid of. When the good time for throwing off the "incumbent" arrives—and it, fortunately for the Sunday school, comes every year—it should be made the occasion for placing the school's leadership in the hands of some one who, whatever he may lack, lives the best part of his Sunday school life at home.

What shall the superintendent do at home? Why, practically everything which contributes in any marked sense to the Sunday school's suc-

Home Work Possibilities.

cess. His home work is basal and constructive, in comparison with which his field work, as important as it is, is incidental. Indeed his visible platform work, born at his fireside, is in a sense incidental. The name of the things which he may do at home for his school is legion, and cannot be catalogued in these condensed pages. The mention of a few of them, however, will be suggestive, and the working superintendent will find the rest of them as he conscientiously pursues his quest.

First among them is the preparation of his

lesson. Everyone knows this, and everyone who is at all acquainted with Sunday school needs and proprieties also knows that this preparation should be most thorough and most comprehensive.

**Preparation of
the Lesson.**

There is no occasion to dwell on this point. Pity the school whose superintendent comes up Sunday after Sunday evidently oblivious of the lesson and its bearings, unable to give any helpful or suggestive turn to the exercises, and groping vainly from first to last for a thread for which he has made no search until the arrival of the lesson hour. Can anything short of the superintendent's absolute personal immorality be so pernicious and so demoralizing in its effect on the school? The unready superintendent needs to be inducted into home work.

It is at home that the good superintendent selects his music—and the music of the Sunday school should be of the superintendent's selection.

The chorister cannot know the thought of the individual who is to give direction to the ex-

**Selection of the
Music.**

ercises at every turn, nor is there any one with whom the superintendent can divide this responsibility. The music should be made a part of the lesson, and should be selected with extreme care. The leader who pounces upon his music before the school in a hit-or-miss way not only destroys the intended and realizable effect of the music but writes himself down before his own people as among the careless and

unprepared. In the quiet of his home, with the lesson before him, the superintendent should search his song book from cover to cover, listing, selecting and rejecting until there is a ringing harmony of thought throughout the whole. His selecting should even go so far as to discriminate between the verses of a song, and fix each selection in its proper place. One who has given no thoughtful attention to the arrangement of Sunday school music can have no idea of its possibilities in promoting the interest, education and development of the school. Taking hold of this problem with a determination to solve it, the work becomes easy, fascinating and inspiring.

The office of the Sunday school is primarily to promote the study of the Scriptures, and these should have a much more prominent part in our school exercises than is generally accorded them. It is not enough that the school simply read the lesson responsively or in concert, especially if the reading is done from the quarterly or the lesson leaf. With Bible in hand each scholar should find the place and read from the book. There should also be other selections, bearing on the lesson, both to help in the understanding of the lesson, and to cultivate in the school a knowledge of how to find all the books and chapters of the Bible. All this is a fine drill for the school. The superintendent should carefully select these readings at home. He may also post them on the blackboard Sun-

**Reading of the
Scriptures.**

day morning, or may print them with rubber letters on white cardboard. By providing each Bible with three long, slender cards for book-marks, and having these cards respectively of the three national colors—red, white and blue—the members of the school will soon learn on coming in to look for the posted readings, mark them, and be ready to promptly take part in the reading exercises at the proper time.

In his home work-shop the superintendent should make out all of his programs. [See chapter on "Program-Making."] He has or should have here all the materials and all the conditions for doing this work to the best

**Preparation of
Programs.**

advantage. It is often the case that a number of programs covering a series of connected lessons can thus be worked out together, resulting in a symmetry for the whole not otherwise obtainable. It is sometimes well worth while to spend an entire evening if necessary in working out the details of a program for a single ordinary Sunday. Indeed, as far as the superintendent is concerned, the regular Sunday service and the special Sunday service should share equally in the matter of preparation. These pages are written in the firm conviction that the Sunday school is under *any* circumstances entitled to our best and most painstaking special work.

The general planning for the school must also be done at home. The reasons for this are obvious. In the quiet of the home, with his records, papers and facts at hand, the superin-

tendent has his field spread out before him as at no other time. While he often wishes to consult with his fellow officers and workers, he needs to have suggestive lines of work in mind

The Time for Planning.

before such consultation. Many a school is doing exceptionally fine work because a consecrated superintendent is carefully mapping its campaigns in the privacy of his own fireside.

Right here I wish to introduce with special emphasis a point which is too often overlooked. It is that we are prone to give to the Sunday

A Share of the Very Best.

school only the comparatively valueless part of our time. The Sunday school must command the same kind of energy and devotion that is given to the most serious of personal affairs. The school and one's business must share alike in the best efforts which the brain may put forth. There must be no more slighting of the one than of the other. The school must not be put off, by officers, or teachers, or others bearing a responsible relation to it, with the leavings of worn-out hours. One's duties may and should be so planned that the Sunday school shall have a share of that time when the brain is the freshest and the flow of energy the strongest.

Do you get the full force of this, brother superintendent? It means that not only your weary

Work it Out Yourself.

evenings, but a fair share of your vigorous mornings, should be laid on the altar of your work. "But how can I carry out this idea?" No

one can tell you; yet if determined upon its realization you will find the way. When the way is found, and the full significance of this infusion of your most capable personality is appreciated, you will wonder why you had not thought of it before.

If the superintendent is to be a visitor, he must also be visited. If he would approach, he must be approachable. His latch-string must be out for any one who may wish to call upon him, and he must be quite certain to have it under-

**The Wide-open
Home.**

stood that his Sunday school people are doubly welcome. He is always glad to see his pastor, who is his most valued adviser. His fellow officers, his teachers, his pupils, must alike feel free to offer and to seek counsel. His neighborliness and hospitality are of course home work.

The crown of the superintendent's home work, however, is meditation. The digestive mental process by which his school and all its interests are brought to pass and re-pass before him is perhaps productive of more good to

**Some Fruitful
Meditation.**

his work than all his special activities put together. The quiet, undisturbed, seemingly idle hour in which his loved school is the subject of his thoughts is the most fruitful hour of the week. It is a time of comparison, analysis, sifting and weighing; a time of profitable retrospect; a time of taking stock of the future; a time when a solution of the trouble with that

unruly class over there comes to him as an inspiration; a time when an entry into some forbidding life is clearly opened; a time when an insight into the spiritual needs of the school is revealed;—*the* time of all his hours of service. Were the home the scene of no other part of the superintendent's Sunday school life except his meditation on Sunday school interests, it would still be his most important field of work.

CHAPTER VI

THE SUPERINTENDENT—USING HIS HELPERS

Other things being equal, that superintendent is best who gets the most work out of other people. As far as his duties are divisible they should be divided. While it is true that the greater part of his responsibilities are of such a character that they cannot well be shared, yet there are many things which others may be called upon to do, both for their own good and to the substantial gain of the school. The creation of temporary duties in order to furnish needed employment is sometimes advisable, although it should be done with such tact and judgment as to create no suspicion that it is work purely for work's sake.

**Getting Others
to Work.**

The pastor should not and ordinarily does not need to be called upon for regular or special work in order to arouse his interest in the Sunday school. The superintendent finds, though, that no one can help him in an all-around way so well as his pastor, and for this reason is fain to ask his help perhaps oftener than he should. The pastor should not be asked to

**Help from the
Pastor.**

teach a class except in a special dearth of teacher material, but is naturally the instructor of the teachers' meeting when the superintendent is not in position to discharge that duty. It is better to hold the pastor as an emergency helper than to appeal to him for regular service. It is as the superintendent's close personal friend and faithful counselor that the pastor is most useful as a helper.

The assistant superintendent is often a figure-head in the organization, through the failure of the superintendent to allow him to do the things naturally attaching to his position. The assistant should have some part as often as practicable in the exercises of Sunday. It cannot well be the leading part, except when the entire day is placed in his charge, as there cannot be two leaders for the school in a single service any more than there can be two teachers of the lesson to the class at the same time. Full leadership may, with propriety, be given to the assistant for an occasional Sunday, in training him for the emergencies which may call the superintendent away from his desk from time to time. On almost any Sunday, though, the assistant may in a minor part help materially in the service. As a counselor the superintendent should freely use this officer.

The secretary, operating in a different field, bears an equally important relation to the superintendent, who cannot conduct the affairs of the school intelligently unless he is in close touch

with that officer, and thoroughly familiar with the class rolls and the statistics which are being gathered from week to week. The superintendent should himself be something of a statistician, but not in such a way as to trench upon the prerogatives or minimize the office of the secretary. As an adviser the secretary is a most important member of the school's cabinet.

**Calling on the
Secretary.**

The treasurer is sometimes also the secretary, and in a small school the combination of these officers is often advisable. But a growing school should have growing finances, and the superintendent should advise frequently with the financial officer. The superintendent is usually the broader man of the two in business experience, but in infusing his plans into the handling of the school's income he should, if possible, see that the treasurer comes in for the fullest credit that can be given him under the circumstances. The same principle of giving careful credit will apply to the relation of the superintendent to the librarian, the chorister, the pianist, and other officers of the school.

**Acting with the
Treasurer.**

It has already been said, in discussing the teachers' meeting, that the superintendent should make that meeting the occasion of placing in the hands of the teachers, as far as practicable, the carrying out of changes which he proposes to introduce into the general work of the

**Leaning on the
Teachers.**

school. He should clearly impress the idea that the teacher bears to the individual class something of the same relation which the superintendent bears to the entire school. He should expect the teachers to stand officially between him and the classes; to preserve order among those in their charge, preventing the necessity, except in extreme cases, of his giving any public attention to the subject; and to report to him privately any class matters calling for his personal cognizance. Teachers, as a rule, need nothing so much as a more pronounced realization of personal responsibility for their work, and the superintendent may do much toward increasing this realization. In the nature of the case the superintendent may and should lean much harder upon his teachers than upon his fellow officers, because of the closer relation of the teachers to the work of the school hour.

In a general way the tactful superintendent may get a great deal of valuable, though detached, and often somewhat uncertain, help out

A Thorough Search. of the men and women, boys and girls making up the classes. There are people all

over the Sunday school room who, if properly enlisted, are in position to bring in new members, help weak members, hold up the hands of teachers, assist in special ways in the exercises, and in many other ways strengthen the organization and its work. The superintendent should study to discover these people. He will find on investigation that they are much more numer-

ous than he had at first supposed; and some of his best work will have been done when they are converted, as many of them may be, from listless spectators into active helpers. There is no miracle about such conversion. It is a natural—I had almost said a necessary—sequence of proper effort. A realization that such help as can be rendered, let it be of such character as it may, is appreciated, looked for and depended on, proves to be an almost irresistible plea to the normal lay member of the Sunday school.

CHAPTER VII

THE SUPERINTENDENT—PROGRAM-MAKING

When all things are summed up, the real, abiding interest in the Sunday school centers in the sixty or seventy-five minutes per week when the school is in session. With these minutes properly filled, and the component parts by which they are filled nicely adjusted to each other, the problem of making an attractive hour is solved. The process by which the time is well filled is program-making, and the superintendent is the program-maker.

**The Center of
Everything.**

The subject of program-making is necessarily touched upon incidentally in later chapters of this book, but it cannot well be dismissed without specific treatment. The superintendent, whether a tyro or a veteran in the service, must be a constant student of the elements, and the possible combinations of elements, entering into the formation of his programs, clear up to the time when he taps the bell at the end of a lifetime in the work. To some other things he can, perhaps, after a reasonable period of experience, give a little less and less study as the years

**Unremitting
Study.**

pass; but the time never arrives when he can give less attention to the public exercises of his school.

The superintendent of the small school, with limited resources and hampered environment, should not pass over this chapter with the idea that it is not for him, and that it is only intended for

**For the Small
School.**

the superintendent of the large school, which is generally supposed to be able to do almost anything that may be assigned to it. The "program" is only the order of exercises for the day, and let the school be large or small, or let its location be where it may, it must have an order of exercises. The writer of these paragraphs has never been connected with a very large school, and the experiences out of which these suggestions arise have all been in schools either quite small or of limited proportions.

Let the accidents of size, make-up and surroundings be what they may, the superintendent cannot bring many things into the period of the Sunday school session. If

thirty or thirty-five minutes
be set aside for the lesson in

**Narrow Time
Limit.**

the classes, only forty or forty-five out of seventy-five minutes remain. Within this time the opening, the closing, the review, the announcements, the readings, the singing, the prayers, and special exercises of every kind, must be condensed. If the school session be only an hour, which is the rule in some places, the condensation must be even more pronounced. The superintendent, then,

instead of being called upon to create a program to fill a void, usually finds the filling matter less troublesome than its location within his available time.

He needs perhaps a half dozen songs. The lesson should be read in some way by the school, usually accompanied by other readings. These

The Funda-
mentals.

will take up approximately one-half of the time at his disposal. When he has carefully selected and located these songs, and has decided upon the way in which they can best be rendered; and when he has arranged his readings so as to further emphasize the truths of the lesson; and when these and other exercises which are naturally associated with them, such as prayer, an occasional brief word of comment or connection, have been brought into their proper places;—then the fundamental part of his day's planning has been carried out. All of this is just as necessary in one place as in another, and is equally demanded under all circumstances. For suggestions as to the selection, blending and rendering of these various essential parts of the order of exercises see chapters on "A Day in the Sunday School," "Special Days," "Sunday School Music and Its Makers," and "Addenda."

Remembering, then, just the kind of simple task the superintendent has before him, the limited time at his disposal, the limited number of items which can possibly be brought within his program, the suggestions in the following paragraphs will be the better understood. They

deal mainly in principles, some of which are applicable in the every-week experience of every superintendent, and some in the occasional development or emergency, while some of them may deal with difficulties which fall to the lot of only an occasional leader.

General Principles.

A satisfactory program necessarily presupposes a complete and well-digested plan, symmetrical proportion, and nice adjustment of time, with the elimination of the indefinable and the haphazard. These things are impossible of realization without

1. Thorough Preparation. This is a comprehensive statement, but specific reference is made to the study of the lesson of the day from the standpoint of the class as well as of the platform; the selection of such Scripture and of such music as may be used in connection with it; and the gathering of fact, illustration, incident, etc., for possible use as occasion may suggest.

General Preparation.

2. A Study of Conditions. In this is involved the shape and character of the premises occupied, the size and the make-up of the school, its environment, and the kind of exercises most likely to interest, impress and help. The kind of lesson presented is also an important consideration.

Studying Conditions.

3. A Study of the School's Personnel. An appropriate exercise may be altogether impractic-

cable because of the lack of an individual here and there to carry an important part. For instance, the introduction of a solo verse in the reading lesson may fail because of the absence of a soloist, or a class may be wholly unable to render an assigned part because of the absence of one or two important members.

**Studying the
Personnel.**

4. Something to Substitute. Such things as the absence of the soloist, or the important class members referred to in the last paragraph, must not be allowed to wreck a program. The superintendent must provide against all such frequent contingencies by having something to substitute promptly, without producing a jar in the exercises. To be always thus ready for emergencies is one of the striking evidences of skilled leadership.

**Ready for Emer-
gencies.**

In thus laying the foundations for a good program the superintendent must aim, among other things, at two general results: The first of these is to secure and hold the attention of the school. This involves both the character of the program itself and the way in which it is rendered. The other all-important result is so closely allied to the first that the two are practically inseparable, either being certain of failure without the other. This other result is participation. Only that program is satisfactory which is rendered *by the school*, and is made to seem to be the expression of the school. That is to

**Two Things to
be Sought.**

say, the securing of attention and a general disposition to assist should result in evident spontaneity of participation.

When such participation fails of realization it is usually because of failure on the part of the school to understand. Rehearsal of the proposed exercises of each Sunday is as impracticable as it is undesirable and unnecessary (ex-

Explain to the Teachers.

cept on special occasions, and even then it may usually be avoided). The sure precursor of a well-rendered program is full explanation in the teachers' meeting of what is intended. Let the teachers fully understand, make them responsible for the part to be taken by their respective classes, and the difficulty vanishes. When the teachers' meeting is not practicable the teachers may be assembled, when necessary, a few minutes before the opening of the school.

There are certain indispensable qualities which the acceptable program itself must possess. The first of these is appropriateness. The program should, of course, in all particulars, be thoroughly suited to the lesson of the day. It is

Appropriateness.

made for only one purpose—the illustrating and presentation of that lesson—and if it fails in this it fails in all. The inappropriate program is a mistake.

The program must be marked by variety. Interest can neither be created nor maintained in a dull round in which each recurring feature may be confidently anticipated and into which

a new idea never finds its way. Variety does not mean great quantity. One or two well chosen items will suffice to provide sufficient change to freshen the exercises throughout. Nor is variety to be confounded with incongruity. Variety is an indispensable relish.

**Wanted—
Variety.**

A no less important element in the program is harmony. Everything introduced should be in perfect harmony with everything else. It is right here that discriminating judgment is especially in demand. Just as colors, each in itself beautiful, require skillful grouping in order to please, so the very simple composite parts of a program must be so assembled that each contributes to, and in no case conflicts with, perfect harmony of result.

**Wanted—
Harmony.**

It is also imperative that the program be marked by simplicity. A besetting weakness of program-makers the world over is the liability to run into complication. Anxiety to include everything in sight often results in the introduction of features which are so difficult of rendition as to seriously mar the whole. Something easily understood and easily executed—and not too much of it—should be the object of the superintendent's search, both because of its feasibility, and because of its usually better effect on the average member of the school.

**Wanted—Sim-
plicity.**

Flexibility is a quality that every Sunday school program should possess. Reasons for this will

be found in other paragraphs of this chapter, and in other chapters of this book. Even with everything working out just as hoped for, an unforeseen circumstance or a happy thought may suggest a change in some minor feature, of which the resourceful superintendent should be able to avail himself at once. It sometimes happens, too, that for some unforeseen reason the change needs to be radical, in which case it is all the more imperative that such possibilities should always be kept in mind. Some of the most inspiring Sunday school occasions the writer has ever known have been the result of an utter change of program consequent upon a new inspiration or compelling circumstance.

Wanted—Flexibility.

Along with the essentials to a good program it must not be forgotten that there are other things to be as carefully avoided. One of the pitfalls through which the superintendent must pick his way is the danger of his work becoming too "easy," and gradually degenerating into aimlessness. He becomes quite familiar with his school and its possibilities, knows its song book from cover to cover, and has exploited his pupils in many ways. He may be tired on Sunday morning, and may think that "just once" he will select his music and shape up his hour after arriving at the school. It "goes off" pretty well the first time, and he repeats the performance. This repetition is dangerous, and often spoils a superintendent and demoralizes.

Beware of the "Easy."

his school. What may be a good thing done *occasionally* paralyzes the school when it becomes a habit.

A danger diametrically opposite to this in character is running to the extreme of having everything "cut and dried." The superintendent may have an ideal school in mind, and may prepare his programs for that school. He has an

The "Cut and Dried."

exceedingly human school on his hands Sunday morning, and may not see that some special adaptation of his preparation is necessary to make it fit his surroundings. If the ideal and the real thus fail to connect, as the months go by, an air of the perfunctory comes to pervade everything done, the superintendent and the school drift away from each other, and nothing short of a school cyclone will clear the atmosphere and restore normal conditions.

A mistake of which the superintendent is sometimes guilty is making too much of a small proportion of his people in his programs, and ignoring the less skilled. There is

Making Use of the Many.

constant temptation to do this, when things are done so much better by some members of the school than by others. Better have it poorly done at times by others, though, than have some part in the exercises always fall into the same hands. Exercises become insufferably dull when invariably confined to the few; and the school suffers in consequence. Besides, it should be recognized that the Sunday school program has no more

important mission than to develop the untrained and untried in its membership.

If any one thing is to be avoided in Sunday school programs more than any other things, or all other things, it is delay. In many a school it is delay in beginning, delay in announcing the songs, delay in reading the lesson, delay in

**Death-Dealing
Delay.**

getting ready and in executing at every point, delay in completing the lesson, delay in closing the school—delay in everything except in disgusting every live human being on the premises. Brother-who-never-gets-anything-done-until-day-after-to-morrow is usually a thoroughly good man, but he needs above all things a reform in his Sunday school habits.

In closing this incomplete discussion of a most important subject, let me place special emphasis upon the opportunity which program-making affords to the superintendent.

Looking ahead for the special hour for which preparation is

A Grave Responsibility.

imminent, or on through the weeks over a lesson pathway by which he is to lead the school, he can arrange at every step, without let or hindrance, for time, manner and place of bringing out truth in logical sequence or accumulated force. The entire Scriptures, lesson helps and commentaries *ad libitum*, music in endless variety, the blackboard, and people to be led and trained in the use of all of these—all are at his service. As great as is his opportunity, equally great is his responsibility. We sometimes console our-

selves with the thought that failure to misuse opportunity is to escape the consequences of wrong doing; but those who read the Scriptures aright know that failure to *employ* opportunity is a kindred sin to its abuse.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SUPERINTENDENT—A DAY IN THE SUNDAY
SCHOOL

Let us now spend a day together in the Sunday school, remembering that the exercises of each school must be shaped with reference to its resources and environment. Almost any school, however, can follow the outline suggested in this chapter.

To make certain that nothing contributing to thorough preparation has been overlooked, and to set the school an example of never-failing anticipation of this phase of duty, the superintendent should

**In His Place
Betimes.**

always be on hand early. No considerable proportion of the school should ever see him in hat and overcoat on Sunday morning. Following him sufficiently soon to be able to greet and quietly arrange their classes as they come in, the teachers should so time their arrival as to be always in advance of the throng. The teacher should see at once to the distribution of Bibles and song books, of both of which the supply should be ample, and also see to the marking of the readings. No school whose teachers thus remember their duties is disorderly

in the opening. Indeed the teacher's quiet, dignified, unobtrusive attention to details all through the hour is a specific absolute against everything of an unpleasant or disturbing character.

The next essential is the prompt arrival of the school. There never was and never will be a very good Sunday school any appreciable pro-

A Prompt Sunday School. portion of whose members come straggling in all through the hour. Tardiness is abso-

lutely intolerable in an officer or teacher, and is reprehensible in the pupil. It is demoralizing from every point of view, and the superintendent must reduce it to an inconsiderable item, or the work of the school will suffer materially in consequence. It is not an incurable leprosy, but will yield to treatment.

Open the school strictly on the minute. What shall be the nature of this opening? The superintendent needs, first of all, an exercise in which

As to the Beginning. he can count on the fullest possible participation. Many superintendents act on the

theory that such participation is to be reached by degrees, as the exercises progress. This is a misapprehension. There is no need to wait for anything in the way of introduction. Let all understand that they are needed *at the first step*, give them the right kind of thing to do at the first step, and the difficulties will vanish. Let the Sunday school feel that it itself is doing its own opening. Do not let the opening be a stiff, listless, perfunctory affair, wholly in the

hands of the superintendent, or the teachers, or a choir, or any certain number of people.

What is the most natural and easy exercise in which people may be brought to act together? You answer at once that it is singing. To produce the best effect they must do this singing, too, without announcement or the necessity

A Careful Preparation.

of waiting to hunt the place in the book. The preparation for all to take part in the first exercise should also be so complete that no one can have an excuse for standing aloof. The music should be quite familiar to all, in order to remove the last remaining difficulty. It must also be something dignified, grand, swelling—appealing to the worshiping instinct in the Christian and to the admiration of the worldling.

To secure this end placard prominently on the wall a single strong, inspiring verse, such as "How love I thy law!" "Holy, holy, holy!" "Come, thou Almighty King!" "Lion of Judah, hail!" or something equally impressive.

An Impressive Result.

[The same opening verse may be used for a month or a quarter.] While the piano, organ or orchestra plays an introductory bar or two, let the superintendent call the school to its feet by a motion of the hands, the school being trained to respond instantly. Then on signal let every voice strike the first word strong and full, and fill the room with the paean of praise. This constitutes by far the finest and most effective opening I have ever seen. While still standing

let a psalm with which the school is familiar (also changed monthly or quarterly) be repeated in concert, followed by the opening prayer. Then let the school be seated.

Up to this time the superintendent *has not said a word* outside of his participation in what the school has done. He has merely guided, in the simplest way possible. Every

**A Gratifying
Situation.**

one has had an opportunity to assist in the opening, and, having begun in this way, there will be more general taking part in what follows than if the various exercises are approached between voluble announcements and directions on the part of a fussy superintendent. *The school has so far done it all*, and if at all trained has done it incomparably better than it can be done by any officer or combination of officers and teachers.

This point having been reached, give another opportunity for singing. Let the song be something not so well known as to be worn out, and yet something that can be sung with emphasis. In introducing this do not have the

**A Place for
Singing.**

pianist play more than chords before beginning, unless it is designed to cover the confusion of looking for the place. And, by the way, a school can soon be trained to quickly find anything in either song book or Bible. The superintendent can readily tell whether the school needs another song right here or not; and if needed it should be of sufficiently different character from the first to afford variety, and yet should have some bear-

ing on the lesson. When these concert exercises have continued a sufficient time, the reading of the lesson should be introduced. Bible readings are conducted so poorly in most Sunday schools that we can afford to stop right here and give this subject a little special attention.

Of whatever else a Sunday school may be short, a shortage should never appear in its stock of Bibles. The Sunday school is organized primarily for the study of the Bible, and yet, to our shame be it said, in many schools

**Have Plenty
of Bibles.**

the Bible which the teacher brings is the only one available for an entire class. Few schools have half as many Bibles as they need. Bibles are cheap. Why not have enough? How are our young people to become familiar with the Word if never led any farther into it than to see the ten or fifteen verses per week doled out to them by the lesson help? It is not enough that the few words directly in use are set forth on the pages of the "quarterly" or other help.

The text-book of the Sunday school is the Word, and the Word should have the place of honor in the service. Every eye should turn to the Bible, every exercise should lead to the Bible, every song should paraphrase some sweet

**The School's
Text-Book.**

truth of the Bible. Sunday school work means Bible *first*, last, and all the time. The Scripture lesson is rightfully and as a matter of course the leading and all-important item on every Sunday's program. It should not, however, stand

alone. While nothing should be introduced to divert attention from the lesson, other Scriptures bearing upon it or illuminating its truths should have a place.

The interest of the hour can in no way be more certainly augmented than by well selected and judiciously arranged additional Bible readings. At the same time these may be so aimless and so poorly arranged as to be a detriment where they should naturally assist. An incidental good growing out of additional readings is the training in looking for the place which it gives to those who are unfamiliar with Bible make-up.

Bible reading exercises as conducted in many Sunday schools are not only uninteresting but are depressing. It is depressing to listen to a

**A Depressing
Exercise.**

concert reading or a responsive reading in which only a small percentage of the members of the school take part; depressing and demoralizing to have a long and tedious delay in finding the place as readings are announced. Even after waiting for a reasonable time the superintendent often finds that the first responsive verse is rendered by but few readers. The next is read by an increased number, and if the reading be long enough, the responses toward the close may be sufficiently general to embrace a large proportion of the school—provided the school manifests enough interest to take part in the proceedings.

There is a way by which this trouble may be largely obviated. By this plan three short read-

ings are arranged for, following each other consecutively. One of them is the lesson of the day. Another is some Scripture enlarging upon some thought of the lesson. Another is usually an appropriate psalm—we should rarely have

**A Modern Plan
Instead.**

a Sunday without a psalm. These readings may be arranged in varying order, as the selections themselves may suggest, it being possible sometimes to secure a climax in emphasizing some point in the lesson. The Scriptures are selected beforehand, with care, and prominently posted, as described in Chapter V, under the head of "Scripture Readings." The order of the national colors, therein referred to, is quickly suggestive, and will soon be caught by the school, with the aid of the teachers, resulting in the readings being easily marked and promptly and effectively rendered.

The readings may be followed by another song, selected also with a view to securing general participation; and now the time for the lesson has arrived. The exercises up to this time, if promptly and properly conducted, should not occupy more than fifteen to eighteen minutes.

All departments of the school should feel the heart-throb of sympathetic connection with the entire body, and for this reason the Primary classes should usually be present in

**Ready for the
Lesson.**

the main school during the opening, even if there be separate rooms for their use in the recitation hour. A minute or two of instrumental music,

if available, will cover the slight confusion of classes taking their places, and the retirement of the Primary pupils to their own rooms. Even without this music, though, this rearrangement of the school may with a little forethought and practice be accomplished with quietness and celerity. By the way, this end will be promoted by having the classes locate on arrival as nearly as may be where they will sit during recitation. "Decently and in order," you know, are the words of the apostle.

The time of the teacher in the beginning of the lesson will be saved if class secretaries, with as little interruption to class work as possible,

The Lesson Recitation.	will mark the attendance and take up the offerings. An assistant superintendent should
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have already looked after the vacancies caused by the absence of teachers, and have filled them from a corps of regularly appointed substitute teachers scattered among the Bible classes. A period of thirty to thirty-five minutes may be devoted to the lesson. The Bible classes would often like to have a little more time, while teachers of young people sometimes think a little less would be better. All things considered, the time named is perhaps as good an average as, for general purposes, could be selected.

Where the school has an orchestra, or is prepared to render suitable instrumental music, a softly played selection may be begun three or four minutes before the close of the lesson, the teachers understanding the signal to wind up

their work. Such classes as have changed position should now return for the review, and it is preferable, although not always practicable, for the Primary classes to return for the closing period. These classes may at least occasionally be present and participate in this part of the day's program. When the instrumental music is ended a song is announced, the singing of which brings the school again into a sympathetic whole.

Just After the Lesson.

Right here is perhaps the best place of all for making the necessary announcements, which should be as brief as is consistent with their being understood. If held

A Place for Announcements.

over until the close they constitute a more marked interruption. It is desirable that the last impression a pupil takes from the room shall be a thought connected with the lesson, and announcements at the end may defeat this object. The report of the secretary may be introduced at this point, although it is quite preferable

The Secretary's Report.

that this report be in some detail and made on an especially ruled, prominently placed blackboard (see Figure 2, page 80), and not read before the school at all. The blackboard report may be remembered, while only an occasional individual will get the full measure of the verbal report. Besides, the blackboard as a minute-saver is invaluable.

If announcements have been of a character to

divide attention with the lesson an appropriate song just here may bring the school into line again. And now for the review.

The review which follows each Sunday's lesson should be the crown of the lesson. It should not attempt too much. It should aim at en-

About the Lesson Review.

forcing only one or two truths, but these should stand out most distinctly. A bit of well-chosen lesson incident; a strong illustration or two; an application to something or of something with which everybody is familiar; the introduction of some current event with which the thought of the lesson may be properly connected;—all these should be within the quick grasp of the reviewer. Scripture, history, geography, science, experience—everything—may at one time or another be made tributary.

The review must be the most resourceful exercise of the day, or it will fail to serve its purpose. It should always be brief, and the

Wanted—Resourcefulness.

watchful superintendent must be ready to turn it this way or that as the flagging attention or unresponsive condition of the school may suggest. He must have resort to song, special reading, or anything else which promises quick relief to an embarrassing pause. Brother, don't—*don't*—DON'T hang on in a groping, aimless way to an exercise which is failing of its object. Turn quickly to something else. Even when entirely satisfactory the review should be promptly ended, in such a way if possible that the school

may desire more rather than rejoice at its conclusion.

The Socratic or catechetical method is of course the best of all methods for reviewing—just as it is the best for teaching in the classes—as far as it is practicable.

Review periods, however, are always essentially short, and the reviewer cannot make this his sole reliance. That review is usually the most successful to whose questions quick replies have been made by the largest number of people. The aid of the blackboard should be invoked in the review wherever it is feasible.

**The Socratic
Method.**

An exercise thus intended to interest and instruct people of all ages is difficult beyond description. The superintendent must not talk over the heads of the younger scholars, nor must he address the older ones as though he

**Not in the
Nursery.**

were in a nursery. How often does he feel at the close of a day's work that he has gone to the one or the other of these unfortunate extremes! The "baby talk" line is perhaps a more damaging style of review than its opposite, in its effect upon the interest manifested in the exercise. The Primary Department affords a field in which an extremely juvenile style of discourse may be acceptable, although even there it may be badly overdone; but this manner of address has no proper place outside of that limit. The boys and girls of the Junior and Intermediate divisions strongly resent the patronizing style which

implies that they must be talked to in diminutives and nursery idioms. Have you not, on the other hand, seen old and young alike lean forward in eager listening when the superintendent, a visitor, or a substitute, acting as reviewer,

**The Happy
Medium.**

has been so fortunate as to be able to discharge the trying duties of that position without departing from the use of pure English or drawing upon the vocabulary of Mother Goose? Let the review be wholesome, clear, strong, brief, and the young people, whose minds are fed in the day school on solid food, will thrive no less on the undiluted milk of the Word.

What is the superintendent to do amid these difficulties? One of his strong points is to enforce his lesson thought by illustration, which if apt is not lost on any division

**What Shall the
Reviewer Do?**

of the school. Another is to talk just as little as circumstances will permit. Another is to get just as much as he can out of people all over the room, in detached remarks and quick replies, at the same time neatly and courteously cutting off the wordy brother who, once wound up, will never of himself run down. Above all, he must keep things going in such a way that flagging attention will be tempted into at least a semblance of interest in what may come next. The review may sometimes seem to be altogether impracticable, in which case it should be dispensed with for that day.

The visitor is most welcome in every school.

May his tribe infinitely increase! The courteous superintendent incurs a great risk, though, when he undertakes to utilize this factor in the review exercises of the school.

Circumstances are rare indeed in which any one should be invited to address the Sunday school in the school hour. Much less can the superintendent afford to extend such an invitation to the untried stranger. The higher duty to the school just here takes precedence of all other considerations. If the visitor must be recognized, ask him a direct question, in the review, among the general questions propounded to the school. Of course there are visitors who are certain to do most acceptable work, and circumstances may justify even pressing such a guest into service.

**Beware of the
Visitor.**

A song naturally follows the review, and snatches of song may with equal propriety be scattered through it, one of the excellent points of the song service being that

it may be exactly adjusted to the time to be filled. When the hour for closing comes the one thing to do is to close. Even if the end seems to have come all too soon, the close should be as nearly as possible on the minute. Having filled the time full from first to last, without delay or drag, let everybody understand that it is just as important to quit promptly as to begin promptly. The closing song, the benediction or closing prayer, the musical finale, and all is over.

**Finish of the
Hour.**

In our day's work there has been little of elab-

oration, and if the day has been satisfactory it has been as much because of preparation as of execution. There has been nothing of inflexible

regime. There has been no
Coming Again, display of machinery. The
of Course.

program has been simplicity itself. Attention has been close and constant. A chord of sympathy has run through everybody and everything; and the school which has had a succession of days of this kind is always ready for another.

CHAPTER IX

THE SUPERINTENDENT—SPECIAL DAYS

The Sunday school should lose no opportunity of keeping itself before the public in ways that are legitimate and germane to the purpose for which it is organized. It should be steadily advertised by its activities. The community should be constantly reminded of its existence through these activities. It should not only be advertised by the good it has done, but by the persistent energy which permits no vacations in its work and no abatement in its progress.

**Not Under a
Bushel**

One of the efficient agencies for accomplishing the end hinted at is the special day. Nothing has ever been found to successfully perform the same office, nothing to serve the same purpose to the same beneficial extent. It is, however, like many other agencies for good, susceptible to abuse, and it is only when guided and regulated in accordance with strict common sense that it is of unmixed advantage to the Sunday school.

**But on a Can-
dlestick.**

Special days serve several useful ends. Prima-

rily they impress upon the minds of the scholars the character and importance of the several events and circumstances which the days are

Useful Ends Served. meant to celebrate, and they develop the resources and capabilities of the school in

the preparation of the programs for these days. Incidentally they assist greatly in furnishing the variety which is so essential to permanent interest in Sunday school exercises, and at the same time they advertise the work of the school in the community as it can be done perhaps in no other way.

In the broadest sense every Sunday in the year should be made a special day. The alert superintendent is always on the lookout for something which may so individualize the

Every Sunday Special. exercises of every meeting of his school as to impress and

cause them to be remembered. He thoroughly understands the utility of the pleasant surprise, and its importance, not only in interesting, but in enforcing the lessons which it is sought to fasten in the minds of the pupils at every step. The work which throws new light on an old truth is in effect special work, just as is the constant effort to give new direction to the unused energies which abound in every school; and this kind of work will tend to give each Sunday school year fifty-two special days—fifty-two days on which the membership turns toward the place of meeting with cheerful anticipation. Nowhere is this regularly accomplished in just the way

the officers have planned—but where is the well-managed school which has not now and then recorded an accidental special day crowned with a success beyond all expectation? As in all other kinds of church work, while the specific thing for which we labor may not be exactly realized, the effort which we make places us in line for the realization of other good which, in our own planning, is either unlooked-for or is less clearly defined.

**Unexpected
Good.**

By a special day, however, is meant an occasion which throws the school out of its regular line of exercises, disarranges the allotments of time for recitation, and substitutes therefor an especially arranged program. The days generally recognized as special are Easter, Children's Day, Rally Day and Christmas. The three last come in the three last quarters of the year, while the first comes either in the latter part of the first quarter or in the early part of the second. They are, therefore, distributed to pretty good advantage, missing as they do the very hot season, and suiting well the general convenience of the school. Of course there is no happen-so about this, and it is the result of many years of experience and observation by skilled workers in the Sunday school field.

**The Special
Day Defined.**

Other special days may occasionally be interjected to advantage, provided they do not interfere with the regular lesson program, and provided there is sufficient reason for their ap-

pointment. An anniversary in which an important section of the school, or the entire school, is especially interested is always in place. The

The Communion Day.

communion days of the church may sometimes with propriety be added to the calendar of special Sunday school days. A great good in connection with these days is, besides the advantage to the school, the resultant increased attendance at communion. These really prove to be special rallying days for the church, and are much more effective, enjoyable and profitable than the four days already mentioned which Sunday schools usually observe. There should not be so many special days, however, as to "cheapen" their effect on the school and on the community. Intrinsically good things may be overdone.

Placing such a day from time to time in charge of a Bible class, or a division of the school (acting in conjunction with the superintendent),

Developing Workers.

helps greatly as a developer of scholars temporarily charged with this responsibility. The division in charge is expected to especially assist in the opening and closing exercises (leaving the lesson recitation undisturbed), to suitably decorate the building, to distribute invitations throughout the community among possible Sunday school recruits, and to get out the church members not usually attending either Sunday school or the communion service.

The influence of this class of special days on substantial school growth is often unmistakable,

and as advertisers of the school's work they are perhaps equal in effectiveness to all other influences combined. Christmas, Easter, etc., are observed in all schools, and in attempting to make an impression in the community one school is lost in the general celebration. These other special days are free from this hindrance to bringing out an attendance, and therefore have a marked advantage over all other unusual Sunday school occasions.

A Sunday school special day service should not be an elaborate service. A prejudice against such days exists here and there because of the supposed necessity of complication and elaboration. There is no such necessity. [See chapter on "Program-Making."] Indeed simplicity is an essential, and there is no risk in challenging the observation of veteran Sunday school workers in support of this statement. The program for such an occasion if full of difficult details is as wearying to those who look and listen as it is harassing to those who take part. It is very easy to overdo in the effort to entertain, and to overreach in testing the capacity of the Sunday school hour, and both dangers should be and can be avoided. That special day program is the best which is largely constructed *within the school itself*, and tactfully adapted to its make-up and its environment. To have the general trend of the exercises planned by those who know the school and its capabilities is to provide against attempting the unreasonable or the im-

Avoid Elaboration.

possible, as well as to achieve the greatest success.

For Easter, Christmas and Children's Day, the exercises published in such profusion will perhaps furnish for the average Sunday school the

Ready-Made Programs. most satisfactory solution of the problem of providing for these days. Many of these

programs are excellent, and most of them are richly suggestive. As a rule, however, they are too long, a fault which is easily remedied by omission, and which is really an advantage, as it allows some choice as to what may be omitted. It is, perhaps, true of all of them, though, that they may be amended to a greater or less extent to suit the conditions of the school in which a given one is to be rendered. Ever so slight a change may suffice to localize the exercise and render it more acceptable. As a rule the farther this localizing may be made to reach the better. The impress of the individuality of the school should be stamped upon the exercises. The well-managed Sunday school will in some way secure the end of having its programs of every kind distinctly characteristic of itself.

The special day program, like the program for any Sunday school day, should never be inflexible. It should be so far adjustable as to admit of slight variation when, as is

Flexibility of Program. often the case, such variation is desirable. Unlike many

other organizations, the Sunday school requires to have its program to some extent the creature

of the occasion. At all events it is well to have it so arranged that the superintendent may be able without warning to transpose, interject or omit, as circumstances may suggest—and circumstances are prone to frequently suggest such changes. For this reason I prefer to work without printed program as far as possible. There should be something in the planning which may be left out without giving offense or marring the exercises, and something which may be interpolated to fill an unexpected gap or create a pleasing diversion. The necessity of brevity and simplicity must be kept in mind, together with the chance occurrence of the unforeseen, and the possibility of a happy inspiration which may give to a day its very best feature. To thus change on the spur of the moment cannot be undertaken safely by an inexperienced superintendent; but by observation and practice one may in time learn to do this with ease.

The Happy Inspiration.

The exercises of the generally recognized special days, and such exercises as are outside of the lesson on other special days, should contain a maximum of music and a minimum of everything else. This is because music is the most enjoyable of all features of such occasions, because it may be more easily omitted than anything else, and because it is marked by the maximum of participation on the part of the school. Recitations and addresses should, for obvious reasons, be sparingly inserted. Such

A Maximum and a Minimum.

recitations as are considered proper should be rendered by the smaller children—never by adults—and the necessary addresses (if there is such a thing as a necessary Sunday school address) should be assigned only to those who have a keen realization of the place which a minute holds in Sunday school economy.

If at all possible every program rendered in connection with the Sunday school should depend *wholly* on Sunday school talent. There may be

School Talent Only. circumstances where this is impracticable, but they are quite rare. Public occasions

should be school developers, and this end is defeated if outsiders are called in for any appreciable amount of help. Besides, the membership of the school is often and sometimes justly displeased when outside assistance is depended on, and the public rarely regards such assistance otherwise than with disfavor.

No exercises whatever should be held under the auspices of the Sunday school which are not thoroughly in keeping with the objects and aims of the institution. The Sunday school idea should be un-

A Single Aim in View. mistakable and conspicuous.

In the work of no special day should the lesson of that day be concealed or ignored. It may not always be feasible to keep it prominent in the exercises, but at some point and in some way it should be clearly and strikingly revealed.

The regular sessions of Sunday and the Christmas entertainment should not cover all of the

public exercises of the Sunday school. An evening meeting of the school held once or twice a year, at a well-chosen date, during the week, will bring its work to the attention of people who will perhaps never know any-

thing of it personally if strictly confined to Sunday. Such an

**Some Special
Evenings.**

evening in the summer may be prepared for with plenty of stirring music, and abundance of flowers, a little—very little—good talking, etc., and many people may be induced to pay the school a visit who are invited Sunday morning in vain. Let children and adults appear in holiday attire, and make the occasion as bright and attractive as may be. The meeting may be called a jubilee, or any other selected suitable name, and well advertised and prepared for it will be a success. Earnest local workers will be quick to see the advantages of such gatherings for free entertainment in some form, and good programs of many kinds will suggest themselves.

The average Sunday school fails to make of the special day all that should be made of it, or to take advantage of the opportunities it affords both for the development of the school and for

**Unimproved
Opportunities.**

an aggressive campaign for growth in the community. In this era of unparalleled Sunday school development the time should come when such a statement can be made of only an occasional organization.

CHAPTER X

THE SUPERINTENDENT—ADDENDA

In all that has been said in these chapters about the superintendent it has been presumed that the office is filled by a man. It is not to be

Women as Superintendents.

inferred from this that the writer questions the propriety of the same responsibility being placed in the hands of a woman. Indeed woman's superior tact, her devotion to duty, her deep religious life, and often her greater ability to arouse enthusiasm among her helpers, point to her as especially adapted to this kind of leadership. Observation goes to show that in the comparatively few instances in which women are working as superintendents their success is of a higher order than that of the other sex. The one drawback is the very onerous character of the duties, which is sometimes a severe tax on one's personal strength. In many schools the superintendent is really janitor, factotum and general drudge—a condition which should not exist, but which existing settles effectually for such schools the question of sex in this office.

The best type of superintendent is a growth.

It is seldom that one can be inducted into this office in full-fledged equipment for its responsibilities. Men bring various degrees of efficiency into it from the beginning of their service; but no one is so good an officer in his early ex-

Growth of a Superintendent.

perience as he should be a few years later. His work may be acceptable from first to last; but there is a ripeness characteristic of years of painstaking service which is rarely realized in the novice. One superintendent may be better in his first term than another will ever be; but it is only a reasonable expectation that counts on even the best improving as the years go by. The first sentence of this paragraph states a principle which is fully demonstrated in the life of the average Sunday school. The reader has no doubt seen very unpromising beginners develop into most excellent Sunday school leaders; and this normal development is within the reach of everyone who really puts his heart into his work. The representative superintendent should become a very efficient officer in from three to five years' service.

It sometimes happens that a superintendent does better work in his early experience than at any time afterward. He starts out as a careful student of everything affecting the Sunday school, and surprises everybody by his quickly developed capability. He continues in this way until success leads him into self-com-

Does this Mean You?

placency, which is a natural open door to carelessness. It has all become so easy that special effort seems unnecessary. He gradually "lets up." At the end of five years he is a worn-out leader. When one becomes thoroughly satisfied with his attainment in any useful work he has reached a danger line; and this is just as true of the Sunday school superintendent as of any one else. Do *you* need this red flag of warning, fellow officer?

The superintendent should keep a careful record of all his work in the Sunday school. An ordinary pocket memorandum will suffice, although

**Valuable Memo-
randa.** a small book prepared for the purpose, of which there are specimens in the market, is

better. This book should contain in brief the statistics of the school, memoranda of all the songs sung, the Scriptures read, the programs used, and the many other data growing out of active work. Such a record not only becomes a matter of special interest as the years go by, but is valuable in information and suggestion.

The superintendent should include in his preparation for Sunday more than he will be able to use. That is, he should have

Reserve Preparation. in reserve possibilities in his program some of which will

have to be laid aside for some other time. Circumstances may suggest very important changes after the school hour has begun, and the re-

sourcefulness of the superintendent may be severely taxed. The labor expended in order to be thus ready for emergencies is never lost. Never have an iron-clad program.

The bell is fast disappearing from the best Sunday schools, many having dispensed with its use altogether. It has its distinct and proper office, but can really be spared without detriment to the service, where the school is provided with a musical instrument or an orchestra. The sounding of the bell as the signal for everything that is done may become more demoralizing than helpful. In the few places in the exercises where a bell seems to be necessary it should be sounded once or twice clearly, and not jingled persistently in an effort to secure attention.

**The Passing of
the Bell.**

Do just as little talking to the school as is compatible with the work of management. In any case the superintendent must have more or less to say every time the school is called together, and the habit of talking too much is easily formed and not easily broken. If difficulty is encountered in making announcements brief, clear and pointed, a good practice is to write them out and read them from the desk. As recommended in another place, the teachers' meeting affords an opportunity of making explanations which are often made in the presence of the entire school to very little purpose. Not

**For Silence is
Golden.**

only is time saved by adopting this plan, but the effectiveness of the superintendent's directions is thereby very much enhanced.

It should be a rare occasion indeed when the superintendent keeps the school waiting on anybody. No one who has a part to perform has a right to expect any such indulgence. The superintendent should, as far as possible, stand between the young people in his care and the individual who presumes to keep them waiting for a single minute for any purpose, and should protect them from such treatment. If it is a member of the school who is derelict, that member should at least be privately and earnestly remonstrated with, and should be discredited for tardiness on the school's records. If the superintendent himself habitually, or through carelessness, causes such waiting, he is showing at least one pronounced disqualification for the responsible position which he holds.

And, finally, brother superintendent, in all your painstaking work do not fail to recognize the object in view. Thorough organization, carefully planned exercises, close attention to details—all of these things are only means to an end. They are important only as they affect the opportunity of interesting old and young in the study of God's word, in impressing them with its truths, in leading them to appropriate its

The End of the Work.

promises. The Sunday school is fulfilling its mission only as it establishes Christian character and as it leads into the higher life. A question which each responsible officer needs to ask himself, with this realization in mind, is, "How nearly is the school of which I have charge doing just this work?"

CHAPTER XI

THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

As the duties of the assistant superintendent consist largely in helping to do the things the chief responsibility for which devolves on the

**His Work Part-
ly Outlined.**

superintendent, it follows that a manual for the guidance of the latter officer should be no less suggestive to the former. The chapters over which we have just passed are therefore in a sense as well suited to the one position as to the other. It is always within the range of possibility that the assistant may on any given Sunday be called upon to do the work of the chief, and he should, because of this, be a close student of that individual's work. The permanent removal or disability of the superintendent is an ever-present contingency, which points to the wisdom of his natural successor being ever ready for the succession.

There are regular duties for the assistant, however, which very properly and easily fall to his lot, and which the superintendent in turn may perform as best he can during the absence or disability of the assistant. One of these is attending to the employment of substitute teachers

in the absence of those regularly in charge of the classes. During the opening exercises the superintendent's attention is too much engrossed with the work in hand to in every instance discover just who among the teachers may be present and who absent. Even if fully cognizant of all of these details, he cannot leave his desk to attend to them. The assistant should note these things, call a regularly appointed substitute in each case, and have a leader seated with each class as early as may be in the exercises. A still better provision for such emergencies is for the teacher who knows of a coming absence to arrange for the substitute in advance, informing the superintendent of the circumstance.

Securing Substitutes.

Another duty lying especially within the province of the assistant is to greet and seat strangers upon arrival. The superintendent may incidentally assist in this in cases where the visitors come in before the opening, although

Welcoming the Stranger.

his preparatory work may render even this impracticable. The superintendent of course wants to meet every one who looks in on the school, but his time for such meeting naturally comes later in the session. The assistant is better situated than any one else to thus act as host, and to him that position properly belongs. The seating of new scholars on arrival should be attended to in the same way, the superintendent greeting and locating them as the classes begin their work.

The proper distribution of song books and Bibles, and helping the teachers to secure general participation in the opening and closing exercises,

**Distributing
the Tools.**

can be better attended to by an alert assistant superintendent than by any one else. In spite of all precautions, books will become congested here and there all over the school, while many pupils will look about them for books in vain. The quick eye of an attentive assistant will enable him to adjust these inequalities without delay or jar. There always are teachers, too, who fail to apprehend the real importance of attention to details, and this shortcoming may be provided against to quite an extent by the unostentatious activity of an alert assistant. That officer does good work, too, when he tenders a song book, opened at the proper place, to the stranger, or to the slow pupil under his immediate observation. A moment's reflection will show that the superintendent who has gone through this kind of an apprenticeship undertakes the duties of his office under much more favorable auspices than the individual who comes from the pew to the desk altogether untrained.

A Sunday school is frequently in need of more than one assistant superintendent. The duties

**The Number of
Assistants.**

already outlined indicate that with a large attendance they may become too heavy to be successfully discharged by one individual. The number of assistants required is contingent upon the size of the school, but there should be at

least one to every hundred of attendance, and more may sometimes be needed. The efficiency of the organization may be promoted by placing an assistant in charge of each department, including the Home Department, in which case the number would usually have to be increased. In cases where departments are thus placed in the hands of assistants it is of course understood that the assistants are amenable to the general management. The woman in charge

Primary Superintendent.

of the Primary Department (and this officer is naturally a woman), generally known as the primary superintendent, is also an assistant superintendent. Her duties are of such a character as to render her department in a sense independent of the main school; yet to carry out the idea of effective organization her relation to the superintendent is necessarily the same as that of her fellow assistants, although she must be relieved of special connection with other work, already outlined, which assistants should usually perform.

Both sexes should be called into service as assistant superintendents. There is perhaps not a school in which this position cannot be especially well filled by women, and very often better by women than by anybody else. If more than

Both Sexes Needed.

one assistant is needed it is well to call both sexes to the office. As a superintendent who has tested the matter conclusively, I want to testify that the assistance and counsel of a bright, con-

secreated, resourceful woman is invaluable. As a helper to the teachers of the younger classes she is beyond comparison, and in preparing for special days and public Sunday school occasions she is a host in herself. Best of all, she is reliability itself, and where the average good sort of a man will fail in an undertaking she will bring it to a triumphant conclusion.

The superintendent should be consulted in the choice of the assistant superintendents, as well as of the other officers of the school. To do the

Selecting the Cabinet.	best work he must have the hearty co-operation of people certain to afford that co-opera-
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tion. He may not know just who can best be depended upon in this particular, but he is more likely than anybody else to possess this knowledge. A school is sometimes placed in the embarrassing situation of having chosen a superintendent by a barely sufficient vote, and feeling the necessity of electing as an assistant a rival candidate who desired the office. Such an election is seldom productive of good results. It is doubtful whether a barely elected superintendent should accept office, unless certain that there is no feeling lying back of an apparent acquiescence in the result, or under any conditions which practically compel a "compromise" in the make-up of the remainder of the official board. It is not meant by this that the superintendent should insist on naming the remaining officers; only that he should be so far consulted as to insure an absence of friction in the new arrangement.

CHAPTER XII

SUNDAY SCHOOL MUSIC AND ITS MAKERS

At several points in these pages, in connection with the work of the superintendent, and especially in "A Day in the Sunday School," some reference has been made to Sunday school music. This book is not intended for an exhaustive treatise of topics germane to Sunday school management, and yet the subject of music cannot well be dismissed without further attention.

Second only to the use of the holy Word, singing must be rated as the most important part of the Sunday school service. This grows out of its variety, its adaptability and its restfulness. Music can be made to serve a wonderful

**Bible First,
Music Next.**

range of uses in the Sunday school. It is the natural vehicle of praise. It is a most forcible annunciator of the truth. It is an unfailing remedy for a dull period or an embarrassing break in the exercises. If appropriate and well executed it swings everybody into positive sympathy if not into actual participation in a single item of the service—a consummation at which the thoughtful superintendent is always aiming.

In short, it is indispensable all along the line of the day's work.

Sunday school music should be both vocal and instrumental. The human voice in concert singing needs the guidance of and is enriched by the

**The Aid of the
Instrument.**

tones of piano, organ, violin, cornet, clarionet, violincello, double bass, or any other instrument capable of being harmonized with song. Almost any Sunday school can have an organ. With a little effort many a school can have a piano, which is better, and which is the more feasible since pianos have been so greatly reduced in price. With this excellent foundation the close student of a school's interests will sometimes be able to add a violin, or a cornet, or something else, to strengthen the music.

In organizing the music of the Sunday school the superintendent should rely as far as possible upon the school's own resources. Outside talent

**The School's
Own Music.**

should not be called in unless by such calling it can be incorporated into the school.

Great possibilities in musical organization lie within the reach of many schools in which their presence is hardly suspected. An orchestra, which may be made very useful, is often formable out of purely local material which is only awaiting the incentive of competent leadership. Besides the good connected with the music itself, to interest young people especially in it is to tie them fast to the work.

A good supply of song books is indispensable.

That school only is well equipped which has a number of books at least equal to its average attendance; and in no case should the supply be so short as to provide less than one book for each two persons. It is really unsafe to depend, if good singing is desired, even on one book to two people, as the distribution of books must be perfect if all are able to sing—a distribution somewhat difficult to secure.

**Have Plenty
of Books**

It is not a question of whether this or that individual sings or can sing. The ability to sing is an incident of which the superintendent and his aids should seem to be not cognizant. The courtesy of being offered a book is appreciated, and even if the book is at once laid on the seat unused, the officers' part in the matter has not been lost. It is not infrequently the case that the people who, from constitutional difficulty or lack of training, do not sing, follow with their eyes the course of the song on the page. The close observer will discover, too, that many of these, especially if they be elderly people, who are so often overlooked in matters of this kind, listen with moist eyes and evident feeling to the words swelling from the throats of the younger people around them.

**Whether People
Sing or Not.**

The vocal music of a Sunday school is much the better of being led by a precentor, or by a choir, though the precentor is preferable. If neither of these is available a class of strong singers can be placed to advantage in a position

not too far from the instrument, and where it can most affect the general singing. These are

**Leading the
Music.**

matters which can be arranged only with reference to the make-up of the school, the size and shape of the room or rooms, and other circumstances of a purely local character.

There are of course more or less songs in most of the song books which have little character. Some of them are meaningless words set

**Meaningless
Music.**

to easy, catchy jingles, and convey no definite idea to the singer or hearer. This style of composition is characteristic of a good deal of current Sunday school music, making it necessary to buy song books with careful discrimination. Nevertheless there has never been a time when so much choice music was available. The schools, while dearer than ever to the children, are enrolling adults as never before, and musical composers have risen to the needs of the occasion. Songs full of truth, simplicity and sweetness, dignified and soul-stirring, in which old and young can alike join with enthusiasm and delight, now abound.

As has already been said, the selections of music to be sung should be made with reference

**The Adaptation
of Music.**

to the thought of the lesson of the day. With the fine collections of songs now available these selections can be well made if the necessary time is given to that work. There is, however, a limit to the special adaptation of

music, which should be kept in view. The lesson of the day may be one for which there is no stirring music, or no music with which the school is familiar; and in either event it will be necessary to make corresponding allowance in the selections. There should be variety in the music, too, that of stirring character, so popular with the children—and with adults as well—being interspersed with those songs of deep, tender sentiment which appeal so strongly to the human heart.

There can hardly be a serious difference of opinion as to how Sunday school music should be rendered. A something whose presence or absence is easily discovered, but which is not easily de-

**The Rendering
of Music.**

scribed, is absolutely essential if a song is to perform the office for which it is intended. This something is a kind of *esprit de corps* which marks the entire exercise. Who can tell just how this is to be secured? Or who does not know that it may be thoroughly characteristic of one song and entirely missing from the next? A nice adjustment of the "time" in which a song is sung has much to do with its effectiveness. If sung too rapidly it is a breathless, undignified and often ridiculous hurrying to a calamitous ending. If sung too slowly—which is the more common fault of the two—it is dull, dispirited and depressing. Draggy singing is a narcotic which if steadily administered to a Sunday school will deaden its energies and empty its chairs.

The singing should include the voices of the largest possible proportion of those present. A good choice of music is an indispensable beginning for so desirable an end.

**The Teacher and
the Singing.**

This choice, though, is only a beginning. The work of the teacher can right here be made most effective. A word from the teacher when the song is announced will do much toward bringing every pupil into line with an open book. The hearty participation of the teacher in the singing is another progressive step. An encouraging nod, or a suggestion as to the place, or the sharing of a book with a hesitating member of the class, may accomplish wonders. *A teacher who does not sing needs a better reason for sitting silent than any other member of the school.* The influence of the superintendent in securing results, in singing as in many other things, ends just where the teacher may take up the work and carry it to a gratifying success.

A volunteer song day will once in a while be enjoyed by the school. Let it be announced on a Sunday that on the following Sunday the songs

**A Volunteer
Song Day.**

will be of the school's own selection, any one's choice being honored. When the time arrives call for a volunteer number, accept the first offered, sing only a few verses, and call for the next. In order to save time it is well to begin in each case without instrumental prelude, having only the chords sounded on the piano as a guide. A number of songs may thus

be rendered in a short time, they are sung most heartily, and a large proportion of the members of the school are on the alert to get places for their favorites.

The impressiveness of a Bible reading may be very much enhanced by having a few chosen singers ready to sing (usually softly), without announcement, after the reading of a verse or a collection of verses, the same verse or

**Song in Bible
Readings.**

verses paraphrased in song. A great many of our hymns and songs are especially suited to this purpose. A good illustration of this is a combination of the story of Jacob's ladder, in the 28th chapter of Genesis, and "Nearer, my God, to thee."

A concert exercise in reading a song just before singing may sometimes be introduced with good effect. It may contain the exact point which it is sought in a review to make clear. It is altogether a question of the song and the occasion, and should rather be an inspiration than a planned exercise.

**What Does a
Song Mean?**

A song is sometimes such a thorough exposition of a text apposite to the lesson that to have the text read by an individual or a class, on signal, immediately before singing, is a great help in impressing a lesson's truths.

**The Reading of
a Song.**

Besides, it leads thoughtless people to see that songs are written for a purpose, a circumstance which many good Sunday school members even

are prone to overlook. It is a good thing thus to bring to the front, as occasion may suggest, the gospel with which many a good song abounds.

Reference has already been made to the precentor as being preferable to a choir for leading Sunday school music. This is because it is difficult to organize and sustain

**The Precentor's
Work.**

a good choir, because the school is apt to depend too largely on the choir to do its music-making, and because the precentor who leads a choir will rarely succeed at the same time in getting a large body of young people to sing well. It should be remembered that it is the business of the precentor not so much to personally lead the music as to lead others in making the music. The unwritten law which guides every other officer of the Sunday school in his work—the securing of the maximum of participation—appeals especially to the leader of the music.

How important then is his office! How essential that he be always at his post!—that he be untiringly patient with his charge!—that his

**An Important
Office.**

personality inspire confidence! —that he see beyond mechanical effect into the spiritual significance of his work!—that he know music!—that he be in the closest sympathy with his superintendent!—that he be absorbed in his duties!—that he be possessed of a contagious enthusiasm!

The other leader in Sunday school music—the organist or pianist—is an individual on whom

much more depends than is sometimes understood. Besides studying and mastering all the phases of the music problem which have been discussed, requiring an amount of home work which is equaled only by the home work of the

**The Organist or
Pianist.**

superintendent, this officer must be unflinchingly faithful and always on duty. This faithfulness is indispensable. The one guaranty that the work of the organist is less liable to suffer from neglect than any other work in the school is that it is performed by the sex whose loyalty to Sunday school duty, when that duty is recognized at all, is its special characteristic. All honor to the young women who uncomplainingly and devoutly give themselves up to this arduous, wearying and too often thankless duty!

CHAPTER XIII

THE SECRETARY

The officers whose duties we have so far been considering have had to do with all branches of Sunday school work—the educational, the spiritual and the business interests of the many-sided institution. The officer whom

**An Important
Officer.**

we are now to consider would seem to be confined to the last named field, and yet his work is so closely identified with and so necessary to the other and leading parts that it cannot be dissociated from them. In fact the importance of the secretary's office is generally much underestimated, to the great cost of Sunday school efficiency.

The secretary is the official head of the record system of the entire school. Good and continuously effective work cannot be done without data from which can be learned just what has been done, and upon which may be predicated the

**The School
Leans on Him.**

possibilities and probabilities of future work; and to the secretary we must look for these data. The school management is in position to act intelligently or otherwise, according as the sec-

retary rises or fails to rise to the full measure of his responsibility. This officer, who may be of either sex, therefore needs a full appreciation of what is being undertaken. Too often he is utterly lacking in this appreciation.

The secretary should be in very close touch with the teachers, and their work on the class-books should be under his immediate supervision, and exactly in accordance with

his instructions. He cannot reasonably be expected to be

**Guiding the
Teachers.**

responsible for results unless he can insist upon such class-book work as will secure results. The market is full of class-books, some of them much better than others; but with any of them fairly satisfactory work may be done if undertaken intelligently and followed out systematically. The go-as-you-please, any kind of marking with which teachers who should and do know better destroy all possibility of useful records, is an evil for which teachers should be held responsible, and which the secretary should be empowered to correct.

Did you ever have occasion to go back over the individual record of a pupil for a term of years? And if so, have you not found it difficult, as many class-books are kept, to get at all the facts desired? When the great

**Tracking up a
Pupil.**

variety of people who find their way into the ranks of teachers, and the many kinds of class members who are made secretaries, are taken into consideration, it is hardly singular that the

ordinary class record should be a somewhat crude affair. It is not only those unfamiliar with the simplest bookkeeping, though, who make up these unsatisfactory records, but business men who in everything else are exact and careful will often keep class-books the meaning of which it is difficult to decipher. It is another illustration of the prevalent idea that it signifies but little how things are done in the Sunday school. But what a satisfaction it is to look up the detail work of an active class in a series of well kept books covering a term of years!

There is, by the way, a generally overlooked positive evil in connection with class records which should not be passed over in this discussion. The teacher of the class with a "good record" will catch the point at once. The

The Bad "Good Record."

"good record" of a class in most schools is based on conditions which tend to curtail the aggressive work of the class. This is of course an inadvertence, and the superintendent finds himself called upon to solve the conundrum of why a class with an especially good record often fails to grow at all. The trouble lies in the standard by which the work of the class is measured.

"Spoiling" the Record.

This is usually its enrollment. Now please note carefully: Attendance is either good or bad according as it measures up well or poorly with the class roll. The aggressive class is always getting new people on its books, and some of these are almost certain to be irregular in at-

tendance. The more vigorous the outside work of the class, therefore, the worse is its record. Pupils soon learn that the perfect class record is secured only by having a limited membership, and this composed of class veterans. Have you not often heard boys and girls say that some uncertain one is *not wanted* in the class, as the enrollment of that one will "spoil the record"?

While doing everything possible to stimulate good individual records, let a different standard for class work be set up. Ignore the roll-book altogether in estimating *class*

standing, and take the average attendance of the class in a

Remedying an Evil.

given period as the basis of measurement of growth. If the class had six present on an average in the last quarter, and has eight present in this one, its attendance has gained one-third, and *as a class* it has done much better work. In doing this it may have increased its enrollment one-half, and its record from that standpoint would be poorer than before. It is not *what its books show* but *what its seats*

contain that measures the field

Measuring the Class.

work of a class. The books, though, *measure the individual*. To measure the class in the same way is to discourage missionary work altogether. If the reader has not caught the spirit and meaning of this paragraph let me urge a continuous study of it until it is understood; for in it is involved a vital principle in Sunday school work.

The teacher who studies the situation carefully

will discover that when a class can be thoroughly enlisted in competition with its own record a high order of work may be expected. The individual who is always aiming to beat *his own* record—not somebody else's—is aiming high. And so it is with the class. And so it is with the Sunday school. You can appeal to nothing more effective than this.

A graphic representation of the attendance of a class or a school, in comparison with former years, which can be shown on a chart on the wall of the Sunday school room, is always a stimulus to exertion. It is a good thing

**A Graphic
Picture.**

to compare an individual with himself, a class with itself, a school with itself, a church with itself. I kept up such a graphic chart of school attendance for a number of years, and it was very helpful and very suggestive in planning school work. The chart is a large manila sheet with fifty-two perpendicular spaces running its entire length from top to bottom, representing Sundays. Horizontal lines crossing these make spaces indicating numbers in attendance as marked on the margin. Beginning at the bottom with a number about the minimum attendance of the school, the numbers are regularly increased on the margin until the top of the chart is reached. If, for instance, the attendance the first Sunday in January is 150, a line is to be begun in the center of the little square in the left Sunday column opposite the figure 150. If the next Sunday's attendance be greater the line

will be drawn diagonally upward to the space opposite that figure and in the second column. If the attendance should fall off the line would take a downward diagonal course. By using different colors of ink for different years, for the zigzag lines thus formed, a very interesting chart can be produced. Figure 1 shows how this chart may be made.

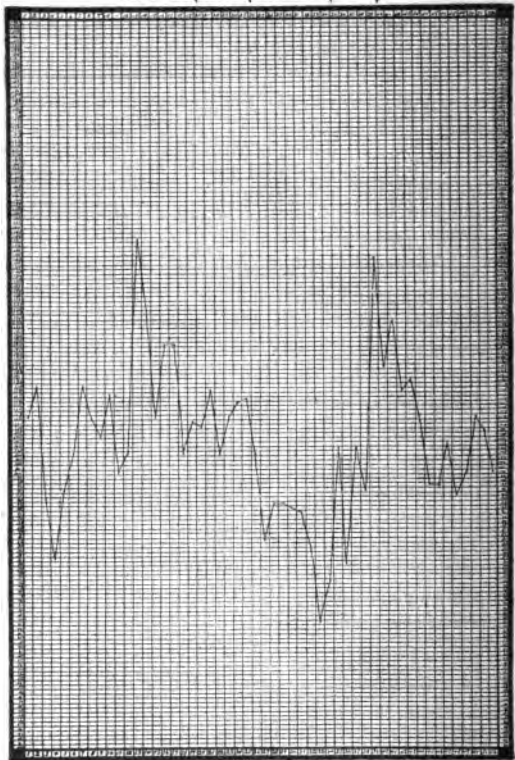
All of the record work of which mention has been made falls of course within the province of the secretary. Out of all the data gathered from the various available sources the records in the secretary's book are made. There are a number of good books within reach which are well adapted to this purpose; but they are of little account unless the individual who uses them does so intelligently. His summary is the final evidence of the secretary's grade as an officer.

As intimated in another chapter, the secretary's weekly report can be placed before the school much more satisfactorily than by its being read. Get a large blackboard and have a painter rule it off neatly in columns and spaces suited

A Much Better Way.

to the record intended to be posted. Proper headings may be painted in at the tops of the columns, as may also any other wording intended to be permanent. The classes may be listed on this board, and their attendance reported every Sunday. Spaces for the Sundays of a month may be left, with a space for the same Sunday of the preceding year. The summary of the school may be recorded in the same way, with

ATTENDANCE CHART.



the total of collections. I have used such a board for a number of years. For plan of this black-board see Figure 2, page 82.

Faithful members of a Sunday school are often away from home, and while away discharge their Sunday school duties as best they may by attendance at other schools.

There should be some way of keeping the records of these

**Caring for the
Absent.**

good people intact on the books of the home school. The secretary can provide for this by having small cards printed, containing a blank certificate to the effect that the bearer (giving the name) was in attendance at some other school on a certain day, and signed by a teacher or officer of the visited school. The presentation of this card to the home secretary will make the record good. Those leaving home should supply themselves with these cards. Such cards may now be secured at Sunday school supply-houses.

It is a thoughtful and appreciated attention to one removing from the local school for the secretary to furnish the departing member with a certificate or letter of introduction to some Sunday school in the community to which he

**Finding a New
Home.**

is going. On arriving at the new place the hope of finding friends is likely to induce the newcomer to at once look up a Sunday school. Under other conditions, unless quite zealous, he may carelessly lose all his connection with Sunday school interests.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TREASURER, AND SUNDAY SCHOOL FINANCES

In a very small Sunday school there may seem to be little occasion to create the separate and distinct office of treasurer, for the functions of

**Is a Treasurer
Needed?**

such an office can be easily discharged by the secretary. Even in larger schools it may sometimes be the case that such an official combination is advisable. However, on the ground that work will be more satisfactorily done to which undivided attention is given, it is perhaps better to usually have a treasurer who has no other special Sunday school responsibility. To this statement should be added the qualification that the treasurer may be useful and needed, provided he undertake to become something more than a figurehead in his position. If he is to do nothing more than receive, care for and expend the small pittance which the representative Sunday school places weekly in his hands, it matters little whether his special office be created or not.

But is the treasurer to do nothing more than this? He certainly has a broader duty. He has a special interest in an educational work only less important than that committed to the super-

intendent. The Christian Church may be said to have never learned to give. It never will properly receive and retain this lesson until it is first well learned in the Sunday school; and it never will be learned in the Sunday school until it is taught there. If our churches are to give as they should there must be a thorough revolution in the Sunday school in this particular. The treasurer, acting with the superintendent and the official board, must plan for better things, and in this way give to his office its proper meaning and character.

An Educational Work.

Two distinct objects should be kept in view in the financial management of the Sunday school—first, the establishing of a system of revenues which shall easily sustain the work of the school on a broad scale, leaving a balance for benevolences; and, second, the forming and cultivation of the habit of regular and systematic giving. The first is usually regarded as the more important point—in fact is the only one ordinarily receiving specific attention; while the second is too often held, if thought of at all, as only incidental.

Two Objects in Finances.

A little reflection will convince almost any one that this order of things should be reversed—not that it is not essential that a school be well sustained financially, but that it is more important that its members be trained into regular giving for church purposes. The Sunday

The First Consideration.

school is primarily an educational institution, and the pocket must not be forgotten while looking after the head and the heart. The two objects in giving are not only thoroughly compatible, however, but each is indispensable to the healthy development of the other.

Having been furnished with the necessary room or rooms, with the heat, light and janitor service accorded to all societies and departments of the

**Now Take Care
of Yourself.**

church, together with such rudimentary equipment as will barely suffice for a beginning, the Sunday school should then be thrown upon its own financial resources. Just as the young eaglet is pushed from the nest on the crag, and compelled to sustain itself in mid-air, although the watchful parent hovers near to protect, so there is a point at which the officers of the church should cease to officially supply funds for the Sunday school, although always watchful to prevent unforeseen disaster. The school needs the responsibility thus placed upon its shoulders, and will derive strength from the necessity of self-reliance.

The annual financial report of many congregations will show an item for Sunday school expenses. This may be simply the making up of a

**In the Church
Report.**

deficit. Or it may be an accounting of the entire expenses of the school, its total receipts having been first turned into the church treasury, as is the practice in some places. There should be no item of this character in the church finan-

cial report, because (1) the school does not need to have a deficit, and (2) the practice of the church officers appropriating school receipts, and then paying the bills, is a needless complication of accounts, and is a cramping of the development of the school in a most important direction. A statement of the funds received and disbursed in the Sunday school should, though, be made a distinct division of the annual financial report of the church, as showing more fully the significance of "the church at work."

A Sunday school should never be called upon to bear any portion of the regular expenses of the church. There are schools here and there whose systems of finance have been so developed that even after securing a thorough equipment and discharging all necessary expenses they have something of a surplus remaining. It is the custom, too, of some churches having such schools to draw upon them for a part or all of this surplus for church expenses. This is certainly a mistaken policy. Surplus Sunday school funds should be held sacred to missions, benevolences, or some worthy object held up for special accomplishment. The young people need the positive evidence that their moneys are designed for a clearly defined usefulness, which is not always apparent to them when given over for the humdrum items of light, fuel and janitor service.

An effort should be made to have every member of the school an unfailingly regular contributor. Parents should see that children are pro-

**Using School
Funds.**

vided for in this particular, and adults and young people whose incomes are under their own control should be asked to name an amount which

**Every One to
Contribute.**

can certainly be contributed weekly. No pressure should be brought to bear to secure large contributions, but special pains should be taken to see that the giving is designed to be *regular*. A pledge card may be given to each scholar, and on this card the scholar may name a specific amount, ranging from a penny a week among the small children up to several cents a week among adults, the contribution for Sundays absent to be made good each Sunday following an absence. There should be no keeping of personal accounts with those who have given pledges.

It is very much better for the sake of the child that it give one cent every Sunday than five cents one Sunday and nothing the next three or four;

**The Only Right
Way.**

or that the adult give five or ten cents weekly than twenty-five or fifty cents spasmodically, even if the latter plan should bring in more money. The training incident to constant giving, and the making up for missed Sundays, is a kind of lesson which can be impressed on the minds of children nowhere else so well as in the Sunday school.

Leaving the special lesson aimed at out of consideration, however, much more money is secured by small contributions regularly given than by large contributions made according to convenience. This principle in the support of churches

and eleemosynary institutions has been so often and so thoroughly demonstrated as to be forever placed beyond question. Both the training of the children and the desired financial results therefore attest the wisdom of the plan recommended.

It is better that Sunday school contributions be so arranged that if a pupil cares to have his weekly amount concealed from his fellows he may be able to do so, while in no case should the special amount given by a member be blazoned before the school, or in any other than an incidental way become known. Many a boy who can at best give only a few pennies feels keenly the contrast, which is sometimes inadvertently made, of his pittance with the amount given by some other boy whose supply of pocket money is liberal and whose gift is thoughtlessly tossed into the envelope.

**The Small
Giver.**

For similar reasons the common practice of reading out or bulletining the collections of the respective classes before the school is objectionable. Not only does this often put the classes in painful contrast, but it may also involve the sensitive teacher. Here, for example, is a wealthy teacher the average of whose class returns is greatly swelled by personal gifts; while the teacher of a class in every way similar is unable to give correspondingly, and the result shows in the reports in such a way as to indicate just where the difference lies. It may be

**No Embarrass-
ing Publicity.**

said that this kind of reporting is necessary as a stimulus to the classes; but experience proves the claim to be erroneous.

The treasurer whose efforts contribute substantially toward establishing some such system of finance as has just been discussed, and which experience has shown to be thoroughly practicable, performs a work whose importance is certain to reach far beyond his term of service.

CHAPTER XV

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LIBRARY

A library is a positive good in a Sunday school, under certain conditions. If these conditions cannot be satisfied it is either a useless incumbrance of school machinery and expense, or a positive injury, and sometimes both.

An Average Impression.

The average Sunday school library is born of the impression that the Sunday school is incomplete without such an annex. The library is selected at random, is conducted without any plan except to see that the books are properly returned when taken out, and bears no vital relation whatever to the work of the school. A very large proportion of our school libraries could be summarily dumped into the waste barrel without in any way affecting the schools with which they are connected.

The primary ostensible object of the Sunday school library is to assist in the moral and religious education of the school.

The teacher in the class-room has a leading part in this education.

The Objects of a Library.

The librarian simply has charge of another division, which should be supplementary

to this first one—that is all. The teacher labors to give a proper turn to habit, to train thought and motive, and to establish character. The librarian's aim is to so give a proper bent to tastes in reading as to work to the same end.

The library as we find it places all this as secondary, giving first place to the idea of entertainment. This order should be reversed. To

entertain should at most be
Let the Order be only a secondary consideration.
Reversed.

Instruction must be attractive, however, if successful, and education and entertainment must therefore go together, an association which is altogether proper as long as the latter is held in a subordinate position.

Of what should the library be composed? It should be a composite affair, and as cosmopolitan in its reach as is consistent with (1) the idea of not allowing it to drift too far into lines not strictly religious, and (2) the selection of such books as will really be used.

Biography should be prominent in every library. The true story of the struggles of a real man or woman, if well told, is fascinating to either

child or adult whose taste in
Give Prominence reading has not become viti-
to Biography. ated. The lives of mission-

aries, reformers, Christian statesmen, warriors and discoverers, pure people of any kind who have had enough of personality to put meaning into existence, may be introduced to advantage. Real people who have done real things of a

wholesome character appeal strongly to all that is worthy in the make-up of the reader.

A limited quantity of such history as is directly connected with the progress of Christianity, or with the bettering of mankind, should be available to the applicant for books.

The limit qualification should in most cases exclude such

**A Place for
History.**

histories as are published in several volumes, or are lacking in that crispness which distinguishes the vitalized narrative from the dry enumeration of facts. Books of this character, as well as all other books in the library, should be introduced gradually and as a result of an intelligent "feeling of the way."

In most libraries fiction takes precedence of all else. Indeed the tendency is to give it altogether too much prominence. It must be recognized, though, as a factor in the Sunday school library, whose presence is just as necessary

**The Demand for
Fiction.**

as the closest investigation of its character is necessary. It is by no means everybody that will read biography and history, but there are few who will not read fiction. While books of all other kinds stand unused upon the shelves, fiction is in constant demand.

The gravest danger lies right here. It is to be feared that the carelessly agglomerated Sunday school library is polluting the tastes of as many as its better books are aiding. The sensational novel, suggestive of everything but personal purity, gets in side by side with the clean and

elevating story, and befouls all whom it touches. That danger was never so great as now. We are living in a time when most emphatically

**A Grave
Danger.**

"of making of many books there is no end." They are crowding upon our young people

from every direction. Many of them are openly and unquestionably impure. Others covertly and smoothly present evil in its most plausible light. An author becomes famous, and each new book is rushed before the young reader without critical examination, or special inquiry as to its qualifications for a place in the library.

A popular new novel under a sensational name tells the story of a young minister led away from his boyhood faith and wrecked. Another in many

**Should These
be Read?**

respects excellent story places an unexpressed but clearly implied sanction upon social

drinking habits, and gives its hero an upward turn in worldly affairs by uncondemned gambling in futures. Should such books be handed out from the Sunday school library?

A very popular style of fiction leads a young man through life in wild and vicious courses, but brings him to a saint's deathbed. Indeed

**Popular and De-
moralizing.**

the story of the reprobate who barely gets into the kingdom is the chief stock in trade of

many a thoughtless librarian. There is a dash of spice in the "wild oats" life which appeals very strongly to the average boy, who argues from observation and reading that it is not the

good boy who behaves himself all his life who is made the hero, but the scapegrace who throws away his bottle and his dice just in time to become sober and put on the robe and the crown. All his life the boy has perhaps heard his pastor exploiting the prodigal son, who really lived the life of a rioter and a beast until starvation forced him back to his father's house. He

**Exploiting Dis-
sipation.**

has listened with wonder to the magnifying of the manliness of the prodigal ingrate, instead of the dwelling on the great love of the Father who could welcome even a man whose life had been barren of all good. Many a story strengthens the boy's impression that a prodigal is a great fellow. Shall we buy the sin-exploiting stories for the Sunday school?

Then there is the story of the impossibly good boy who performs impossible things under impossible circumstances. The ideal is to be commended, and on every occasion held before the scholar for emulation. But the preposter-

**The Goody-
Goody.**

ous in the story serves no purpose except to disgust or possibly discourage. It is "real folks" the boy or girl is after, and either is quick to see the difference between the human child and the automaton.

No matter how good the author, no story should be placed on the shelves until the librarian or some one in whose judgment he has confidence has read it and given it his endorsement. It is unsafe to buy a set of books, especially in

fiction, simply because some of them are known to be excellent. Few, if any, people have written a number of books some of which are not in

**Take Nothing
for Granted.**

some particulars away below the author's standard. Especially is this true of fiction writers. The complete productions of an author may sometimes be purchased to advantage, but more frequently they should be culled.

In biography and fiction, and as far as may be in history, there should be an adaptation of the books chosen to the ages of the people who

**Remember the
Children.**

are to read them. The little children should not be overlooked, and their needs may be supplied from a separate collection of books of a juvenile character, in charge of an assistant librarian or of an officer of the Primary Department. The library is more highly appreciated by the very little folks than by anybody else.

A class of books needed, the inquiry for which will probably to quite an extent have to be cultivated, are those of a strictly religious character.

**Religious Lit-
erature.**

It should be a special work of the librarian to bring these books into notice from time to time in a special way. Some of these are of a purely sentimental character, some treat of ways of working in the church and the Sunday school, and some are full of practical suggestions as to Christian living. This is of course the very best part of the library, just as it is usually the part

least in demand. It is possible to make it highly useful.

In these days of awakening in Sunday school interests the best libraries will soon contain reading courses for teachers, intended to indoctrinate them more fully in the many things which may be learned from the printed page respecting their work. The occasional book now on the shelves telling of these things, as meritorious as it may be, is only the entering wedge. There must be fixed courses of reading, leading by easy steps from the rudimentary to the most complete light yet thrown on this branch of pedagogy. Some of the denominations are wisely moving in this matter.

Teachers' Reading Course.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LIBRARIAN

First among the mistakes commonly characteristic of library management is the choice of a librarian. The church authorities will again and

**A Thoughtless
Selection.**

again go over the ground of availability in selecting a superintendent, and will perhaps look carefully after the make-up of the remainder of the corps of officers, until the librarian is reached. At this point they begin to look for some young fellow to be pleased by being given office, and will make him librarian with nothing else in view than his personal gratification in this particular. In a great majority of cases his knowledge of books and ability to discriminate among them are not considered at all in the selection. He can read the title, he can hand the book through the window, he can properly credit the borrower on its return; he will perhaps keep the books in neat and orderly condition, and will be faithfully on hand to do these things. He can do no more, and is expected to do no more.

A library in such hands never is and essentially cannot be attractive. The applicant for a

book seeks in vain for facts concerning it. The effort to find a book suited to a special purpose is futile. The inquiry as to new books available in the market could as well be made of the janitor. There is no comprehensive knowledge or trained judgment to appeal to in any case. Those who want to know anything of consequence about books or reading can reach no available source of information.

Nothing to Appeal to.

A library so managed commands no respect. In a very short time it ceases to attract the attention of the bright young people, some of whom are found in every school, who desire to make a discriminating use of literature. One by one everybody else comes to regard it in the same way.

A library so managed is dangerous. The librarian should be sufficiently well informed to see that only such books as are in harmony with the ends of Sunday school training are admitted to the shelves, and should be able to discriminate even among these in selecting reading matter for those who apply. A book which may prove helpful to one individual may be wholly unsuited to the wants of another, or may even injure.

Serious Mismanagement.

The librarian should *know*. If it is true in any sense, as some one has said, that the superintendent is the Sunday school, in an equally broad sense the librarian is the library. A librarian without a knowledge of books is as

much out of place as an engineer who knows nothing of steam. He is a misfit absolute. The librarian should know authors, should know the special works of authors, should know the good story from the bad, the enlightening comment from the discrediting criticism, the wholesome from the unwholesome in everything connected with the library make-up.

**Knowledge
Necessary.**

The librarian should be one of the most intelligent and discriminating men or women in the Sunday school. A strong library committee

**A Choice Officer
Needed.**

will not make good the lack of a strong librarian, any more than a good corps of teachers will atone for weakness in the superintendent. There must be a responsible head to the library. This head should be secured by the most painstaking investigation, and when secured should be held as long as available—for no officer is harder to replace than the good librarian.

Of course such an officer may be hard to find. If just such an one as is desired cannot be secured, let the very best possible approximation

**Never a Make-
shift.**

be substituted. In no case let the librarian be a makeshift, and in no case fill the position with a figurehead. An important branch of Sunday school teaching is involved, and fooling with the minds of the children through a thoughtless distribution of ill-selected books is a reckless playing with fire.

The librarian, like every officer or teacher who

amounts to anything in Sunday school service, must familiarize himself with the idea of a considerable measure of personal sacrifice of comfort or inclination. It is hard work to conscientiously serve a Sunday school as censor, guide and caterer in its reading matter; it is hard to devote to this service the long hours through the week which the proper discharge of these duties demands; and it is hard to be at the library window or counter early every Sunday morning to advise with the inquiring and give direction to the thoughtless. But there is Matt. 25: 40 in it, and that is enough.

A Very Hard Place.

Of course the librarian himself should be with the library when in use. He may and should have some one to aid him, though, whose duty would naturally be to charge books taken and to credit books returned, to bring books needed, etc. But the librarian right there to answer questions, and assist in selections, and make suggestions, and quietly give direction to the uncertain, is in his position of greatest usefulness. If indispensable anywhere it is when he mediates between the applicant and the library.

The Librarian on Duty.

The librarian can very materially promote the dissemination and appreciation of desirable books by once in a while speaking of them for a few minutes on the floor of the school. The reading of a few titles affecting current lessons, a brief synopsis of a new book, or a refreshing

memory about an old one, will keep the library prominently before the school, where it is sometimes practically forgotten. An earnest officer will think of many ways in which this object may be promoted.

A small blackboard (made of black rolling cloth) may be used to advantage in bulletining new books as they are added to the library, or in placing prominently before the school the names of books especially adapted to lesson study with a given series of lessons in view. An alert librarian can make such a blackboard very helpful.

The librarian should be assisted by a competent library committee of which he is *ex officio* chairman. Meetings of this committee at fixed times for the discussion of library interests are necessarily productive of good. Any feature of Sunday school work thus treated is the better of the treatment. The library is especially susceptible to improvement in this way. The superintendent should be a member of this committee.

Before the
School.

The Library
Committee.

CHAPTER XVII

THE HOME DEPARTMENT

The Home Department may be a very good thing, or it may be a very bad thing, for the church and the Sunday school with which it is connected. It is *good* when

it is made to serve its legitimate purpose; when it is

**A Good Thing,
or a Bad Thing.**

confined to its proper membership; when it is well managed. It is *bad* when it is made to stand for too much; when it is substituted unnecessarily for the active Sunday school; when it is poorly managed, or is not managed at all.

Too much has been expected of the Home Department. In many places it has been set up as practically a separate and distinct institution in itself, its essentially

supplementary character having been overlooked. It is

Too Much is Expected.

sometimes forgotten that it is intended solely for the benefit of a class of people for whom nothing better can be provided—and it is not remembered that for the rank and file of the church there is something decidedly better. The home-staying idea is altogether too prevalent in the church, without the placing of any

emphasis or premium upon that idea; and, as conducted, the Home Department very often furnishes just this deplorable emphasis.

For whom is the Home Department intended? First, for the shut-ins: For confirmed or temporary invalids; for such of the aged as from helplessness or unfortunate location are unable to attend the public services of the

The People to be Reached.

church; for over-burdened mothers. This must not be taken as a sweeping classification, for many of the best members of our active Sunday schools are invalids; many a sweet, aged face is the inspiration of the school on Sunday morning; and busy mothers are,

Those Who Are Shut In.

as much as any other class of church people are, the life of the Sunday school. The physical disability of the invalid and the aged must be positive, and the "over-burdening" of mothers must be absolute, if any of these are really classable as properly within the province of the Home Department.

Then there are the shut-outs. These are chiefly made up of those who are employed by other people for work on Sunday, and who for this reason are unable to attend Sunday school. I have

Those Who Are Shut Out.

neither the space nor the inclination to discuss the question whether any one is ever justifiable in engaging in such employments. Each must settle this matter with his own conscience. I have known cases where

such employment seemed almost unavoidable, though it is certainly more often unnecessary. Another class are physicians, and a kindred class are trained nurses. Still others are those who are so located geographically that walking to Sunday school is impracticable, and who are unable to avail themselves of any kind of conveyance. Commercial travelers, and others whose employment necessitates their being away from home many Sundays in the year, must also be numbered with the shut-outs.

The relations of the shut-outs to the Home Department must be qualified, just as that of the shut-ins has been; that is, these people may properly belong to the Home Department *if*. Among the

**Seme Active
Shut-outs.**

first mentioned shut-outs street car employees are prominent, and yet one of the most earnest and active members of the Sunday school whom I once knew was a street car conductor. Nearly every reader can recall busy physicians whose place in the Sunday school is often and in some cases usually occupied. I have known trained nurses who managed to be in their classes, or in charge of their classes, nearly every Sunday. I recall a commercial traveler, doing an extensive business, who is among the most faithful of Sunday school officers. Nearly every good school has instances, too, in which the geographically unfortunate are regularly in their places.

As an obstacle remover a desire to attend Sunday school is wonderfully potent. An earnest campaign to create that desire all over the com-

munity should precede the organization of a Home Department in all cases, and in building up that department active membership in the

**A Potent Ob-
stacle Remover.** Sunday school should first be sought, and connection with the Home Department insisted

upon *only* as a necessary and unfortunate alternative. Both the shut-ins and the shut-outs are always decimated in a marked degree where this kind of work is well done.

To all of those who are thus positively shut in or positively shut out the Home Department should come as a blessing. It cannot have a

**A Blessing or
Otherwise.** similar value, however, for anybody else. To the classes of church people, or people

within the reach of church influence, not already enumerated, it is only in exceptional cases that the Home Department can bear the same beneficial relation. The reasons for this are obvious. People in average physical condition, whose comings and goings are under their own control, will rarely if ever do good Sunday school work of any kind outside of the active Sunday school. Poor lesson work is almost invariably done by people who ought to be and can be in the Sunday school, but who voluntarily stay out. If willing to work, they are ready to do so in the regular way. The Home Department which presses these people into its ranks, instead of into the active Sunday school (with the Home Department sometimes as a possible doorway), is simply affording a place behind which the shirk-

ing element in the church may hide. Under these conditions it is providing an excuse to the lazy. "O, I belong to the Home Department," is an easily erected barrier between the lazy church member and plain duty. A relatively large Home Department means a church with a poor Sunday school spirit, and is a bad indication for a church.

**A Place for
Hide-Behinds.**

In the too prevalent misconception of the province of the Home Department it is thus made an institution, instead of an annex to an institution. It is made an unnecessary substitute for instead of a needed adjunct to the Sunday school. It is too generally employed to secure results in itself which are only practicable in connection with the active Sunday school itself, in touch with its leadership, and under the influence of its *esprit de corps*.

**An Annex, not
an Institution.**

What are the difficulties in the way of making the Home Department useful outside of the lines within which I have insisted that its special work should be confined? Its most striking weakness lies in the difficulty of keeping up lesson work—and without lesson work the Home Department means little or nothing. It is almost wholly lacking in the vitalizing touch which is so potent an influence in the Sunday school. It has nothing except the occasional presence of the visitor to stimulate interest from the standpoint of personality. It lacks class companion-

**Home Depart-
ment Weaknesses.**

ship, and the stimulus of the living, present teacher. It is without hour or fixed time, and if lesson study is slight or omitted, there is nothing to even partially make good the omission. Its work is done in an isolated way and at long range, which in Sunday school affairs is usually unsuccessful. It never reaches the careless or thoughtless, to whom lessons received are always incidental, and to whom they must come largely from environment. In fact, and in short, one must be an unusually high type of Christian, or an unusually earnest inquirer after truth, to maintain any special interest in Home Department study.

What has been said is not meant to detract in any way from the credit due the Home Department as an agency for good, or to minimize

the possibilities of its usefulness. It argues nothing
A Great Good, Nevertheless. against the Home Department

confined to its proper field. It is a good thing, and very useful, as the only Sunday school resource of such people as are wholly unable to attend the Sunday school. Its proper work is a great work, but it consists in taking care of those who must be at home, and heartily discouraging any more staying there.

What are some of the good things which cannot well be secured through any other agency than the Home Department? It brings the Sunday school lesson to people who want it, but who would otherwise be unable to get it. It helps people to whom even this slight touch

with active church work may mean a great deal. With good visitors, careless and indifferent people may sometimes be touched for their spiritual betterment. It insures the shut-offs of all kinds that they are not forgotten, but are an appreciated part of the church whole. The shut-in mother often takes care of the regularity and promptness of children in the Sunday school itself. Well managed, it ought to be a substantial and regular feeder of the active Sunday school. Those who do even fairly good work in the Home Department want a more positive good, and I have seen it thus materially recruit the regular school. Many other ways in which good grows directly or incidentally out of the Home Department might be mentioned.

**Strong Points
Enumerated.**

How may the Home Department be made effective and useful? It should be a regular department of the Sunday school, provided for fully and completely. The

Home Department superintendent should be an assistant

**How to Make it
Effective.**

superintendent, and subordinate to the general school management. The work of the department should have regular official attention from the full board of Sunday school officers and teachers. The superintendent and visitors should be chosen with care, and should carry into the discharge of their duties the spirit characteristic of the earnest Sunday school worker everywhere. The plans and purposes, in their formation and execution, must be marked by good judgment

and regular system. Thus conceived, planned and conducted, it should be of great value to the church community.

The officers of the efficient Home Department have hard work before them. It is harder to keep work of this kind in proper shape and well

**Some Onerous
Duties Ahead.**

in hand than to look after many other kinds of church activities. The usefulness of the department depends largely upon the personal character, regularity and devotion of the visitors. The visitors are the vitalizing element of the entire undertaking. They are the connect-link link with the church. They are the special messengers of the church body, of the pastor and of the Sunday school superintendent. The usefulness of active Home Department visitors can hardly be measured.

Without discussing in detail the very simple plans on which the Home Department is to be conducted, and which are fully outlined in the

**Regular Meet-
ings Necessary.**

special literature which is a necessary part of the Home Department outfit, I desire to make a special suggestion which I believe will be found most helpful. The members of the Home Department should be brought together at stated intervals for a meeting of their own and devoted wholly to their particular affairs. Such a meeting may be held quarterly or semi-annually, and will prove to be an occasion which will be looked forward to with much interest. Such a meeting, regularly held, will be a bond of

union. It will form a visible and realizable connection between all the component parts of the department. Incidentally, too, it will give force and significance to the movement in the community. It may not always seem feasible to hold such meetings, but the end aimed at will justify untiring effort in removing whatever may be in the way.

The need of active social connection is felt in all branches of church work. Every consideration affecting this need is emphasized when applied to the Home Department of the Sunday school. To the shut-ins especially do social

**Restoring Old
Connections.**

possibilities appeal with peculiar force. Convince this splendid element in all our churches that the Home Department means the renewal of active brotherhood and sisterhood with the people with whom many of the confined or suffering have once been in close touch, and you have won their allegiance beyond all peradventure. Besides, in doing this you have in a measure restored to at least partial activity in the church a quota of its very choicest members. All this good may be effectually promoted by establishing and maintaining the regular Home Department meetings to which reference has been made.

Do not let your Home Department and its management be a matter of impulse. Do not be in a hurry to achieve great results. This is a case in which seemingly great results often mean unfortunate results. The natural proportion of a church community to be ministered to

in this way is relatively small. The aim should be to make this ministry thorough and helpful, rather than to impart to it any quality of a more evanescent and showy character, as has so often been done in ill-considered efforts in this special line.

CHAPTER XVIII

ABOUT THE COUNTRY SUNDAY SCHOOL

Those who write on Sunday school topics are met on every hand with a remark of this kind: "The good things which you recommend are all right for the city school, but are not feasible in the country." The idea is thus advanced that the country Sunday school is handicapped all around for a high class of work and corresponding results. Is this assumption well grounded?

**Not Feasible in
the Country.**

Let us look into the special disadvantages encountered in rural and village Sunday school work. Prominent among these is a less convenient style of buildings.

The modern Sunday school room, from which class rooms are shut off during recitation, is rarely found outside of the city. It is equally true, though, that such rooms are not usually found *in* the city. The country Sunday school suffers in this particular, then, only in comparison with the higher type of city schools, and not in comparison with all city schools. Leaving out of consideration a minority of the city schools,

**The Modern
Building.**

Sunday schools everywhere are located in quarters of very similar general form. Besides, a rapidly growing proportion of country and village schools are now securing the advantages of architectural convenience.

A much more serious problem with the country Sunday school is its greater difficulty of access. Muddy roads in winter and early spring;

**Difficulty of
Access.**

tired horses in summer; the necessity of the greater part of the membership, or at least a great part of it, walking at all times and long distances; snow, rain and flood in season, emphasized by every attendant condition in their obstructiveness: all of these are especially in the way. Such combinations magnify the difficulties of visitation, too, which is so important a phase of Sunday school activity. The same troubles also largely interfere with the teachers' meeting.

These various interferences culminate in the winter season, and in many places an entire suspension of Sunday school work for several of the inclement months is the

**Winter and Summer
Suspension.**

result. This suspension sometimes seems to be necessary, but could frequently be avoided were officers and teachers more determined in the discharge of duty. On the other hand, city Sunday schools are cut to pieces by absenteeism during the hot months. I have an instance in mind in which more than half of the membership of a city school is away from home in July and August. An occasional city school wholly suspends in these

months, although such suspensions should never occur. There are not many Sunday schools other than "evergreen" except in the country, where the part-of-the-year school is becoming less general, although many city schools are kept in line through the vacation season only under very depressing conditions. It is a very serious situation indeed which really justifies any suspension in either place.

It is often urged by those making these comparisons that the country school is less able to meet the financial requirements of Sunday school equipment than the city school.

This point is well taken when the comparison is made with

Meeting Financial Needs.

the small minority of city schools before mentioned. It has little or no significance, though, when the great body of city schools is considered. In a large proportion of these latter schools there is a measure of poverty never known in the country. Many city schools are purely missionary in character, with no church organizations back of them, and with no revenue whatever except that furnished by the people of slender incomes to whose personal devotion the very existence of the schools is due. From the standpoint of financial ability the country schools will average

Equipment is Available.

with, if not above, all others, omitting a small per cent of the city organizations. The proportion of schools easily able to furnish all needed equipment is perhaps not widely different in the city and in the village or country. Be-

sides, much of the equipment of the very wealthy schools is fanciful rather than useful; and, after all, the equipment necessary for the best work is cheap, simple, easily procurable, and is made almost everywhere feasible by the fact that it can be adapted in quantity exactly to the needs of the people by whom it is to be used.

The rural Sunday school suffers in comparison with the city school in the lack of stimulus afforded by surrounding things of a stirring character.

Lacking Neighborhood Stimulus.

The natural result of the isolation of rural people is a kind of quiet which is not easily stirred into neighborhood enthusiasm. In communities where people live in close contiguity they are more susceptible to influences inducing them to act together. Opposite conditions interfere to some extent with the coherence and quick responsiveness in country Sunday schools which are more generally characteristic of city movements. This is much more of a drawback to Sunday school effort in the country than appears on the surface.

On the other hand, the Sunday school in the country possesses some corresponding special advantages over any similar organization located

Special Rural Advantages.

in a center of population. A country neighborhood can be more readily interested *as a body* in Sunday school movements. It is rarely the case that a rural community is the scene of a multiplication of such efforts, while the city worker is usually confronted by pronounced com-

petition at nearly every step. In the one place the Sunday school can be made a leading attraction, while in the other there is always a probability of being overshadowed by larger, wealthier and more influential schools. The rural Sunday school builder comes more nearly having a field to himself than any one else engaged in similar work.

The opportunity of getting together is much more appreciated in the country than elsewhere. The loneliness of the week is broken by an hour of fellowship which is looked forward to with pleasant anticipation; and if the school is

**The Weekly
Gathering.**

made what it should be, this predilection for assembling may be made a great power for good, for which there is at best only a weak counterpart in the city.

The country Sunday school possesses an appreciable advantage in the comparative stability of the population in the midst of which it is located. People are constantly coming and going to some extent even in rural communi-

**Shifting Popu-
lation.**

ties; and yet the substantial families of one generation are likely to be the substantial families of the next. As a result, the well established school becomes a neighborhood institution in a sense in which it does not occupy that position elsewhere. On the other hand, in spite of the constant presentation of new people to "work on" which such a condition presents, the shifting character of much of the population is the bane of the city

school. Now and then a great missionary city school profits by this constant change in the people within its reach; but in most cases it is a very serious handicap in Sunday school building.

Perhaps the greatest advantage enjoyed by the country Sunday school is that there is less to distract attention than in any other location.

Attention Less Distracted.	There are a dozen counter-attractions in the city on Sunday morning, and in week-day
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Sunday school work, to every one found elsewhere. In the city influences of every kind must be combated if any impression is to be made on those not closely identified with church work. In the country there is much less to divert attention, and attention once secured is unquestionably, and for the same reason, more firmly held.

All things considered, there are many points of practical equality in the two classes of schools under consideration. In a *general* measurement

Very Much Alike, After All.	of opportunity the city school has perhaps the better of its rural neighbor; and yet this
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difference in its favor is more apparent than real. There are much greater differences in the possibilities of different classes of city schools, or in different classes of country schools, than between city schools on the one hand and country schools on the other. There are many grounds for the classification of schools which are more legitimate and more significant than the ranging of them in the two great classes indicated.

Nothing has been suggested in these pages

which cannot be utilized in some measure by any Sunday school anywhere. Given the same degree of earnest neighborhood endeavor, and the same high grade of interest in the exercises and class work, and satisfactory results will follow, let the school be located where it may, and let its size be anything within the range of possibility. In any case, under any circumstances, the outcome depends on the people who make up the organization and the degree of their determination and consecration.

**The People—Not
the Place.**

Rural Sunday school worker, allow a country-bred fellow worker to assure you that the best Sunday schools of our day are not great because of their location, but because earnest people have spared nothing in effort to make them what they should be. There are no model Sunday schools which owe their high character to accidental conditions. The same kind of consecrated, unremitting, year-in-and-year-out effort *anywhere* will bring some measure of the same outcome. The uncertain prospects of any representative school, in city or country, are usually the result of a general indisposition to make special effort unless all conditions are strikingly favorable, rather than chargeable to anything else. The sons of Anak are always of forbidding size when we are not *full* of the purpose of going up and possessing the land in spite of opposition, whether the land be a few city blocks or a rural neighborhood.

**What Lies Back
of it All.**

CHAPTER XIX

PUBLICITY

To be highly useful the Sunday school must be known, and well known. In planning for greater things judicious exploitation is necessary. It is not meant by this

"Modest" Publicity.

that the school is to be advertised just as the wares of the merchant are too often advertised—by glaring posters, startling headlines and extravagant statement; but that quietly, unostentatiously and persistently it should be kept before the public. There is a kind of "modest" publicity which permeates every nook and corner in the neighborhood in connection with many unquestionably good things, and this is just what the Sunday school requires.

There is little risk in saying that the school of which the reader of this paragraph is a member, unless exceptionally circumstanced, is not

Does the Church Know?

as well known as it should be even in the church of which it is a part. Such knowledge of the average school as exists outside of the usually small circle of those most actively working in it is altogether incidental, and not due to any special

effort to disseminate such knowledge. Indifferently interested people who are in the school itself often possess too little definite information to enable them to intelligently press its claims, even if disposed to do so. Those church members who are not in the school of course as a rule know still less about it. The result is that we have what should be an anomalous, but it is to be feared is really a normal, condition of ignorance of the school just where knowledge of it should be complete.

If this is true of the church community, what shall we say of the general community? The fact of the existence of the school is perhaps generally known—and this is often about all. Accident may occasionally bring it to public attention. Any evil that may befall it, or trouble that may arise in it, may reach even remote corners through the industry of the neighborhood gossip. The good which even a poor school may in some measure be accomplishing, however, often attracts little or no attention, because unpublished. The agency for local moral uplift is practically unrecognized, and the ends of the organization may thus be partially defeated.

**Too Little
Known.**

There is a sense in which a good thing will advertise itself. An institution which is active in every good word and work cannot be wholly concealed. Mention has already been made of the advertising growing out of special days and special occasions. This is very good as far as it goes; but it is only a beginning. The neigh-

borhood work of the school, along altruistic lines, incidentally supplements these special occasions most effectively. Though not done for advertising

Incidental Advertising.

purposes, the school's local benefactions, its helping of the poor, its flowers for the sick, its substantial aid to the suffering, its Christian visitations, its attentions to the stranger—all of these things are most effective in creating a place for it in the hearts of the people.

But we must go still farther. There must be a regular work of publicity undertaken and sustained for its own sake, under the auspices of the organization. How may this work be conducted?

As a general principle the neighborhood should be kept under unobtrusive official surveillance. By this it is meant that in a general way cognizance

Needed Vigilance.

should be promptly taken of events occurring, elements removed or introduced, or conditions changing in the community, any or all of which may have a bearing on the opportunities or field of usefulness of the school. To appreciate the importance of this one has only to test the comparative results of periods in which differing policies in this particular have been in force. This careful observation is of great practical consequence in assisting the work of the school in the community.

The Sunday school should never proselyte. Christian courtesy is unworthy of the name when it does not promptly recognize the impro-

priety of one religious organization trenching on the preserves of another. Extremely delicate points are sometimes involved in problems arising just here, but the entire subject may be dismissed with the remark that a strict application of the Golden Rule will provide a satisfactory solution.

Within these suggested limits, then, a positive atmosphere of Sunday school extension should be created in the community. People like to widen the influence of a recognized good thing, and, under proper conditions, will lend

A Healthy Atmosphere.

their aid. When officers, teachers and committees do their part thoroughly and heartily, the members of the school, with no little help from the community itself, will see to it that the institution is well "advertised by its loving friends." The individual is the most effective of all advertisers, and the organized utilization of individual effort is equal to securing almost any reasonable publicity and consequent growth at which the school may aim.

The machinery of the church may assist materially in advertising the work of the Sunday school. The pastor is of course always ready and willing to speak for the school from the pulpit. A pas-

Official Advertising.

tor here and there may fail to assist his school as much as it is believed he should in this way; but it will often be found that such failure is due to lack of such information as the superintendent can and should place

at his disposal. Official and unofficial expressions of the church session and officers are always very helpful in this connection, and as a rule should be utilized more frequently and more earnestly in the school's behalf. The Sunday school should have a prominent place on all announcement bulletins.

Wherever feasible, the Sunday school should avail itself of the printing-press in advertising its work. It is not every school that can do this,

**The Printing
Press.**

and yet the press was never so generally available as now.

Indeed the time seems to be fast coming when even the rural community which cannot summon the press to its aid in matters of this kind will be exceptional. In many a Sunday school where such a thing would have been regarded as impossible a few years ago, the amateur press is now regularly used. Not forgetting that there are still many schools for which the use of its own printed matter, for any purpose, is impracticable, it is true that many other schools are doing without this aid simply because the possibility of its use has not been realized, and the steps have not been taken which are necessary to get the work into shape. The idea should not be abandoned without thorough investigation.

These remarks are not intended to apply to the blank forms, cards, etc., which are so useful in the detail work of the school, and which may all be purchased of Sunday school supply houses, at reasonable cost. The advertising mat-

ter spoken of here is that prepared especially for the individual school, and circulated to a greater or less extent in the community: invitations, special announcements, programs, etc. Where the number of copies required is not

**Some Useful
Work.**

large these may be prepared on typewriter, with carbon sheets, or by one of the several reproducing processes now on the market. Where made in any of these ways it is not usually so much a matter of expense as of labor, and those vitally interested in the Sunday school rarely allow labor alone to prevent the doing of a good thing for the school.

That school is most fortunate, though, which is able to have a local periodical publication of its own. The writer has had experience with both monthly and weekly papers devoted to local Sunday school work, and has no

**The Period-
ical.**

hesitation in pronouncing them of great value. Of course much depends upon the way in which they are conducted. A good deal of work is involved, but it is attractive and interesting, and well repays outlay and effort. Such publications are much more feasible, too, than is generally supposed, as has been clearly demonstrated.

The weekly is of course the better type of paper, but is more difficult than the monthly to sustain. Its usefulness can hardly be measured. The distribution in the school on Sunday morning of a little sheet, reporting in detail the work of the school and church on the preceding Sun-

day and in the week following, is a stimulating influence which must be felt to be appreciated. Statements of things accomplished, statistical

The Very Best Thing. facts, comparisons of one period with another, live records, programs of exercises,

congregational news, personal mentions, items showing the touch of the school with the community, plans for class work,—these and many other things which will at once suggest themselves,—afford the material, even in a small church, for a most interesting publication.

Let the printed matter of the school take any shape it may, its personal distribution in the community will be most helpful. To say just how an undertaking of this kind can best be launched and sustained in a given school is impracticable; but the ingenuity of a determined organization will usually find a way, if the problem is taken up in earnest.

CHAPTER XX

AND FINALLY

The Sunday school should be an opportunist. You and I do not know what to-morrow has in store. It is well that we do not have such knowledge. But we should have our schools so organized that quick advantage may be taken of anything, expected or unexpected, that may be utilized to develop the school's usefulness or energies in a new direction. Things are happening every day which the alert worker recognizes as opportune, and of which he is quick to avail himself. We may or we may not see these things. If we *do* not it is often because we *will* not. The Caliph Omar, who built the famous Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem, said that there were four things that could never be recalled: the spoken word, the flight of the arrow, the past life, and the neglected opportunity. The life of many Sunday schools is a series of unseen and neglected opportunities..

An Opportunist.

Before closing this little book, fellow Sunday school officers, let us look our surroundings squarely in the face. Those who enter upon work of any kind in which they are at all in-

terested understand that success is likely to come out of it only when something substantial has been put into it. To some things this particular thing must be given; to something else, that; but the conditions of successful Sunday school work can be satisfied with nothing less than the absolute giving of one's self. Efficient Sunday school service cannot in the nature of the case, or under any circumstances, be a half-way service. Half-heartedness and efficiency are thoroughly incompatible.

Our Contributions.

It is not enough that we give barely that which we can conveniently spare. We must go farther, and give of our best. Personal sacrifice is the price of personal efficiency.

Only the Very Best. We most thoroughly devote ourselves to that which we love most, and we love that most for which we have given up most. This is a Medo-Persian law of human nature. We have no right to expect God's blessing on our gift to him of that which in itself is valueless, or for which we have no special use; but it is when we lay on the altar the very best we have, in effort or in anything else we place at his disposal, that the showers of blessing may be expected to be never-failing.

There is no such thing as a strict accounting against the requirements of Sunday school activity. The demand comes up here, there, everywhere. The sacrifice, petty or great, may take almost any form, and may be required at almost

any time;—the only thing we surely know about it is that when it is called for it must be made. May the test never come without finding us ready!

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H/R



